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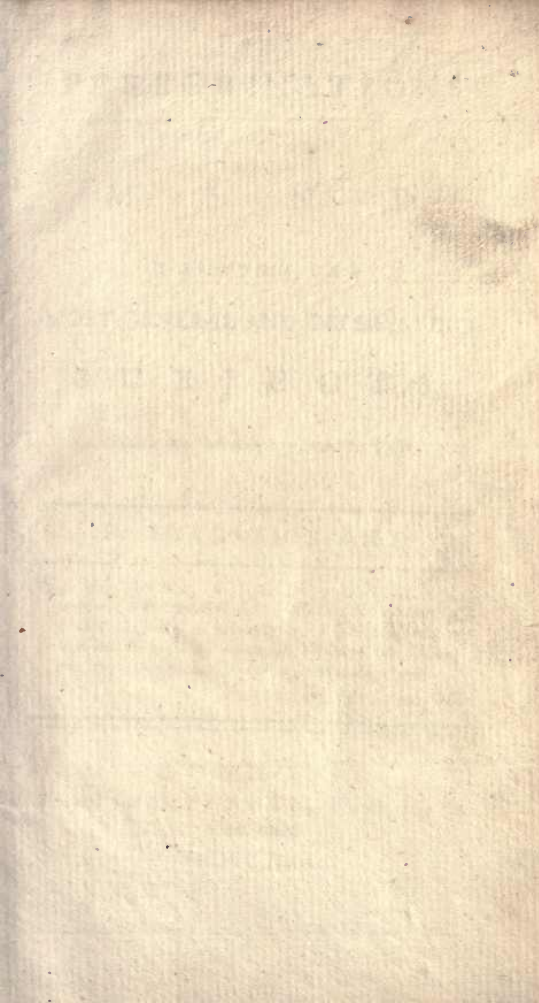
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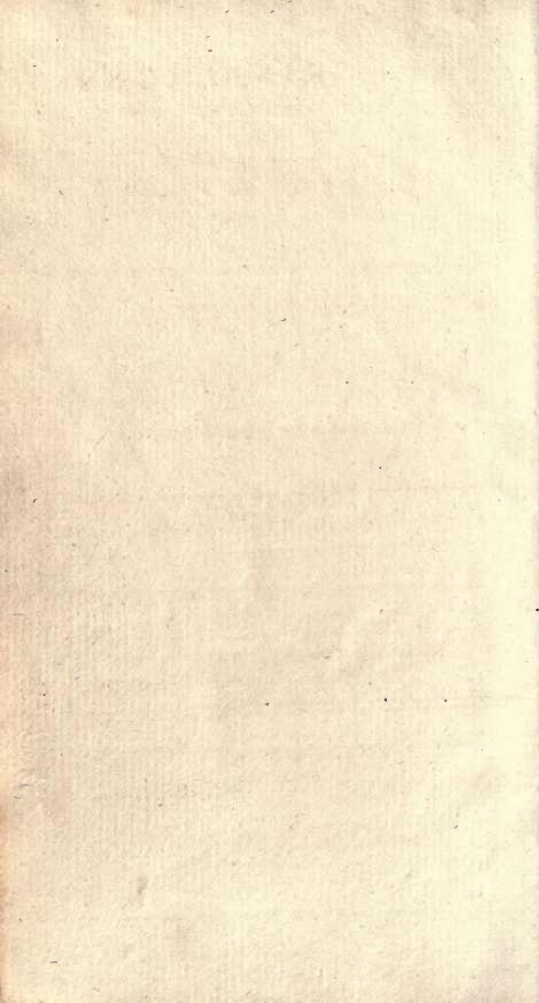
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Betsy De Senery

1770







PEREGRINATIONS

OF THE

M I N D

THROUGH THE

MOST GENERAL AND INTERESTING

S U B J E C T S,

Which are usually agitated in Life.

By THE RATIONALIST.

Τριῶν γὰρ ὄντων βίων, ὧν ὁ μὲν ἐστὶ πρακτικὸς, ὁ δὲ δι-
ωρητικὸς, ὁ δὲ ἀπολαυστικὸς· ὁ μὲν ἑκλυῖσθαι καὶ ὀκλῆσθαι τῶν
ἡδονῶν, ζώδης καὶ μικροπρεπής ἐστιν· ὁ δὲ θεωρητικὸς, τῇ
πρακτικῇ διαμαρτυρῶν, ἀνωφελής. ὁ δὲ πρακτικὸς, ἀμοιρή-
σας τῆς φιλοσοφίας, ἄμυσθαι καὶ πλεημμελής. —

PLUTARCH. de Liberor. Ed.

L O N D O N :

Printed for G. P E A R C H, Numb. 12, in
Cheapside.

M.DCC.I.XX.



PREFACE.

It is not down as a duty incumbent on every author to give some plausible reason for his appearance in that conspicuous and hazardous character, by way of apology for the distraction he makes in pen, ink, and paper. For my own part, I can give with truth, and without any affectation, that my chief inducement to write, was my little inducement to write.

But this is not all; a whole apology that I cannot be urged in defence of publication, for which also an author is accountable. Why did you publish?

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P R E F A C E.

IT is set down as a duty incumbent on every author, to give some plausible reason for his appearance in that conspicuous and hazardous character, by way of apology for the destruction he makes in pen, ink, and paper. For my own part, I can, with truth, affirm, that amusement was my first inducement to write :

Dum nihil habemus majus, calamo ludimus,

says Phædrus ; whose apology shall be my own. But this is not all : amusement is no bad plea for writing ; yet it cannot be urged in defence of publication ; for which also an author is accountable. *Why did you publish ?*

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ty R. Cohen

P R E F A C E.

the cruel critic cries. This is the question that makes me tremble ; and, before I answer it, I must demand a moment's respite, to recollect my scattered spirits —

Conscious of a pure intention in the moral part of the work, and sensible that a mean capacity may suggest some useful hint to the wisest man, I have ventured into the ocean of critics, and launched some innocent opinions, which cannot be productive of harm, but may possibly be attended with good, as they plead the cause of VIRTUE.

The subjects are miscellaneous ; partly sentimental, partly speculative ; many of them such as have given occasion to a variety of opinions ; which are freely canvassed, with a view to merit, at least, the applause that waits on the appearance of candor.

The

P R E F A C E.

The merit, or demerit, of the execution will be pronounced at the critic's dread tribunal; from which there is no appeal. I will only add, that gentle correction will be kindly taken; and that it is easier to demolish a castle than to build a cot.



E R R A T A.

- Page 44, l. 20, for *opinions* read *inclinations*
- Page 75, l. 5, take out *their*
- Page 80, l. 7, for *on* read *to*
- Page 89, l. last but 2, for *excellence* r. *pre-eminence*
- Page 105, note, for *ipsage* read *ipsaque*
- Page 139, l. 20, for *age* read *ago*
- Page 141, note, l. 2, take out *ne*
- Page 162, l. 12, for *overweaning* r. *overweening*
- Page 165, l. 20, for *hearts* read *lives*
- Page 226, l. 25, for *sower* read *four*
- Page 252, l. 3, for *not that that* r. *not considered that*

С Т И Т И О

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[Faint, illegible handwriting]

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And who's left but of his
 Three bless the fair who know not
 MORTON

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in two columns. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list includes names such as "John Smith", "Mary Jones", and "Robert Brown", and addresses such as "123 Main Street", "456 Elm Street", and "789 Oak Street".

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INTRODUCTION.

IT may not be thought amiss, by way of introduction, to give some little account of the following chapters; the reasons for the choice of them, and the end proposed by them.

Chap. I. [On the Stage.] is in answer to some retailed objections, that were originally suggested by bigotry * and prejudice, against theatrical amusements, much insisted on by the priests of the Romish communion, to serve the purpose of spiritual tyranny, which was endangered by freedoms

* In tracing objections to theatrical exhibitions from bigotry, the author was aware that reflexions had been thrown on them at a time when bigotry was out of the question: such we find in lib. xiv. of Tacitus's Annals. But against what were they levelled? Against lewdness. To lewdness, then, let them be confined; and not extended to scenes of innocence.

INTRODUCTION.

freedoms assumed in lashing and unmasking vices hid under the cloke of solemnity. If, in defending these improving amusements, the author should seem, to any one, too much inclined to recommend dissipation, he declares he no farther approves them than they are conducive to welfare.

The second chapter [On Love.] was penned in consequence of a private dispute with a learned and sensible gentleman, who maintained the existence of it to be a result of fashion. It was judged proper to premise this, lest the author should seem to be fighting against the air.

Chap. 3. [On Happiness.] may possibly bear a Stoical aspect, not meant to belong to it; but it is designed only to convey the dictates of a rational voluptuary.

The three subsequent chapters seem to demand no comment.

The chapter on War is taken up on an old grievance; but a repetition of such sentiments will, it is feared, be never unreasonable: for what signify inveighing against and punishing crimes that affect only

INTRODUCTION.

only a few individuals, and overlooking enormities that tend to the destruction of millions? As often as war is mentioned, the old, yet shrewd, remark of the little pirate to the great robber will ever start up in the memory. It has, indeed, been alleged, as a consolation for this inhuman butchery, that, in combination with pestilence and other calamities, it takes off superfluities that would, in a course of years, overstock the globe: tho' there is little danger of such a redundance: a very considerable part of the world is at this day, and has been, time immemorial, uninhabited, as if to make room for emigrants. But warriors have not that remedy in view; their own ambition is all they consult: on which account they are not so amiable as executioners, who remove only the nuisances of society. It is that spirit of greediness and ferocity, that incites to war, which is censured; a spirit which, within a smaller circle, within the private concerns of mankind, produces knaves and villains. Even if it were necessary to prune the luxuriance of the human race, let Calmucks and Tartars,

INTRODUCTION.

tars, Turks and Arabs, the weeds and worthless branches, be lopped off; men whose uncultured passions confound them with brutes, and who could almost feed on the carcases of those they slaughter; not the polished and civilized inhabitants of Europe, who are enlightened by the beams of science, and ought to shake off savage manners.

Chap. 8, in defence of theatrical humour, appeared not unseasonable at a time when the rage for refinement, imported from a neighbour kingdom, bids fair for banishing one of the most pleasing qualities of the stage, the representation of real character.

From this we pass on to chap. 11. [On Patriotism.] introduced as a subject much in question at these jarring times.

Chap. 13. [Ancient and modern virtues compared.] attacks what the author esteems a prejudice; by which the want of reserve and gravity is construed as a proof of corruption, to the discredit of that freedom which every honest heart must love. Besides, there is something so gloomy in the unreasonable notion of continual

INTRODUCTION.

continual degeneracy, as quite to dishearten a man.*

The fourteenth chapter [on the secrets of metaphysics,] is a natural result of the disappointment which ever awaits the diving researches of an inquisitive mind in the mysteries of nature. In this chapter no reflections are meant to be thrown on the philosophic ornaments of literature : but only a lamentation on the boundaries of human knowledge, which is bewildered when it would grasp at what is beyond its reach,

Left the author should be arraigned for detraction in chapter 15. [On the unreasonable compliments paid to the ancients for their works, exemplified in Homer,] he will here, as he has in the body

* Should it be thought that the authorities adduced from Petronius are doubtful ; that M. Nodot has imposed on the world in his story of the copy said to be found at Belgrade ; and that the consul Petronius was not the author of what has been long fathered on him ; admitting all this, no shining quality beside patriotism seems so to blazon the Greek and Roman characters, in the unimpeached accounts of other writers, as to raise our envy ; and even that principle, amiable as it was when confined to the proper limits of its native district, was sullied by many unwarrantable sallies it made, sword in hand, abroad.

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body of that chapter, remark, that he reverences genius in every age, whether amongst ancients or moderns ; at the same time that he prefers that which is combined with judgement. The beautiful quotations with which he has adorned several of his pages shall serve to evince what a regard he has for their real excellences ; which he is sorry to find interspersed with deformities : the greatest portion of them, notwithstanding, it must be confessed, falls to the share of the prose writers, though a poet is here in question ; judgement being more particularly the province of the former, and genius of the latter.

Since chap. 17. [On cruelty.] was penned, a doubt started up, whether a repetition on this subject, to a reader of feeling, does not merit that appellation. If it should chance to offend, let the insertion of it be numbered with the Errata of the book.

Thus far was judged proper to be premised of particular chapters.

Many of the chapters (1, 2, 9, 13, 16, and 20,) are casuistical. The reason why they were chosen was, that in problematical, or controverted, topics, there

is

INTRODUCTION.

is greater scope for argument, and a less probability of the charge of triteness being exhibited, than in others. It is at all times allowed to obtrude opinions on disputed points, when settled and confirmed notions would not suffer a repetition.

If it be objected, that some of the subjects have been handled before, the author answers, in his vindication, that he has not always been satisfied with the opinions he has met with, which have too much rested on systems, and on systems frequently not founded in nature. The remarks he has ventured to expose are such as were suggested by his own private observation or experience: and where they concur with the sentiments of authors that precede him, he has their suffrage; where they do not, he will take candor for his plea, and the love of what appeared to him in the guise of truth. He has talked much of prejudice: if he has given any examples of it peculiar to himself, he begs his readers pardon, and, when convicted, with pleasure kisses the rod of correction, from whatever quarter. Candor with him ever does, with every one ever ought to wear the *fairest form*.

The

INTRODUCTION.

The learned reader will find many observations herein contained old and familiar, which may to others appear in the garb of novelty and importance. It is with books on every subject, in some degree, as it is with a grammar; that a system, be it good or bad, is made up of trifles; on the selection of which depends the character of the author. In grammar, letters, syllables, and words are to be properly arranged: in speculative topics we look for a just disposition and choice of ideas and sentiments.

In most common subjects, after the multitude of authors, little else is to be hoped for but a difference of dress. Writing has this in common with painting. The human body has been painted numberless times by numberless painters, with limbs, colours, and canvasses, nearly the same; but each has a manner peculiar to himself: and it were more agreeable sometimes to gaze on a faulty piece, for the sake of variety, than always to be confined to the sight of a few excellent portraits.

THE



THE
RATIONALIST.



CHAPTER I.

ON THE STAGE.

Nil prodest quod non lædere possit idem.

OVID. Trist. 2.



THE general tendency of the theatre has been the subject of much controversy among moralists. It has been thought by some to have a good effect in reforming the manners of a people ; whilst others have declaimed against it as one of the instruments of the devil. One represents it as the school of virtue ; another as the nursery of vice. One asserts that it

B

inflames

inflames the passions ; another that it dilates the breast and opens the human heart : but both sides agree that it is not a matter of indifference which can do neither good nor harm.

In all controversies (it is proper to premise) the disputants on either side present the dark or favourable side of a question to view, according as it suits their several purposes ; and endeavour to conceal and suppress every circumstance that makes for their antagonists. This observation is founded in fact, and true of most disputes in general ; but it is eminently applicable to the friends and enemies of the drama, who have, each in their turn, variously characterised it according as their different fancies led them.

Among the ancients the theatre was in general in esteem with their writers, the most austere of whom considered it as a school of instruction : another cause for objections against it must be assigned, which is not difficult to be discovered. Bigotry and superstition have been, at different times, the parents of every folly, and, what is worse, the nursery of crimes. From this odious source are originally derived the objections which have been made to the representation and writing of plays, for the public entertainment ; and (to the honour of dramatic pieces be it spoken,) they have met with the most virulent opposition from the professors of the Romish communion, who even deny those concerned in them the privileges of their fellow-citizens. A
reason

reason for this is easy to be imagined, and has been often hinted at : as it is the proper province of the comic muse to expose knavery and folly, that church had the highest reason to dread her lash. The priests gave the alarm, and the simple part of the world have echoed back their cries.

In order to justify their censure of the drama, its enemies of every denomination have unfairly selected the loose and unchaste productions of some writers of this class, and from them pronounced sentence on them all. The partiality and injustice of this procedure are too glaring to be pointed at. I am not at all surprised if objections are made to unchaste comedies : it is not the interest of a well-regulated community to encourage them. Luxury and debauchery unnerve the human frame, and are undoubtedly the characteristics of a state leaning rather to a decay, than rising to a greater perfection, as history amply testifies ; and they scarcely ever need a spur, as nature is but too prone to prompt to those irregularities : but the passion of love, indulged with such restrictions as comedy ought to teach, is a generous principle, and may, under certain circumstances, be deemed even a virtue.

Now I am on this point, a fair opportunity offers itself of paying a compliment to the delicacy of the present age. It is notorious (particularly of late years) that the highest disappro-

bation has been shewn of whatever borders on indelicacy in any shape ; and that even to an excess. To such a height has this humour been carried, as to explode what might have been very fairly allowed without violation of decorum, and what the colouring of character sometimes requires in support of a piece.* From Aristophanes,

• A memorable example of this mock-delicacy was not long since exhibited in the cold reception an excellent comedy met with from the spectators. The piece I mean is *The Good-natured Man*, the production of an author of confessed abilities. The interesting scene of the bailiff and his follower, a scene abounding in real humour, upon which the plot in a great measure turned, was ordered to be curtailed, because it represented *low-life*, and wounded the *delicate ears* of the *Midas*es of the upper gallery, who first conceived disgust. The *Jovial Crew*, the *Beggars Opera*, and some others that might be named, meet with the greatest applause : the latter is even indulged so far as to be played for weeks without intermission. Is it their delicacy and connection with high-life that commands this encouragement ? But the public is a fickle judge, and does not always render merit its due. Could the estimation of those pieces be obliterated, it is chance but they would now meet the hiss that is levelled at supposed indecorum. Time is the touch-stone of merit, and they have stood the test. The people are told they are good, and therefore presume not to censure them on that score.

phanes, who had the least imaginable regard to decency, down to our own times, comic writers have, by a reformation on this head, gradually and wisely contributed to wipe off aspersions of this kind, as sensible that the wantonness of men needs not satyrion, nor their madness wine.

The objections made to indecent comedies then are equally applicable to writings of other kinds. Indecent memoirs, indecent novels, or indecent dialogues, are likewise to be exploded : but it does not follow that all memoirs, dialogues, and novels are to be extirpated because some are bad, any more than that all theatrical performances are to be forbidden because there have been unchaste comedies. By a similarity of reasoning might we plead for the prohibition of writings of all sorts, since pure and unexceptionable works of every species may be contrasted with an Aretine, a Rochester, a Petronius, or a Cleland. The amount of such objections as these is actually no more than that bad plays are bad things ; and so are bad priests or bad magistrates ; but we are not therefore to discard all priests and magistrates because some have been bad.

It is likewise urged by the enemies of the stage, that there are some who indulge in diver-

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sions

score. I mean not to depreciate either ; they have their excellence ; but this partiality to the prejudice of more modern adventurers in authorship is too gross to pass unnoticed.

sions of this nature to an excess. To this it may be replied, that if the children or dependents of any one are too much addicted to them, and bestow more time and expence on them than their circumstances will warrant, it is partly to be laid to the account of the head of the family himself, who suffers this excess. Or even admitting that others, who are under no controul but that of their own wills, incline to the same extreme, is the whole body of the public to be denied all amusement because some few indulge to a fault? As well might we assert that no public benefit whatever should be allowed, because all are capable of abuse. Would it be reasonable, for instance, to issue orders for the extirpation of fruit-trees, or for filling up all the wells in the kingdom, because it may happen that a boy may eat of the one, or drink of the other, in a burning heat, and so be thrown into a fever? Questions of this sort might be asked without number, were it at all necessary. There is nothing but what is capable of abuse and misapplication from human perverseness. Prudence is the only guide in these and all other points, and by that guide ought every one to steer his course in the conduct of life. If there are men who have not the least share of this useful qualification in their compositions, I know not what methods can be taken with them: they are unfit for this world, and the sooner they are out of it the better.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, in tempers of the common stamp, a principal reason assignable for an immoderate passion for any thing, is, that it is too great a novelty. This has been found to be the case in country towns where the comedians do not constantly resort: the consequence of which has been, that when they made their appearance, the magistrates judged it expedient to dismiss them, because the giddy minds of the youths of both sexes were intoxicated with the pleasure they enjoyed in these spectacles: which dismissal partly depended on the taste of the petty sovereign who presided during the theatric visit. If he chanced to be a miser, a clown, or an hour-glass-maker, with a taste on a level with those characters, woe to the company! — Excluding the players does indeed prevent the effects of excessive indulgence; but a surfeit is the most radical cure.

In vindication of dramatic performances, it may with justice be said, that if they do swell the passions, it is the nobler passions which are called forth; passions which, if well directed, are the ornaments of human nature. That they be properly regulated, it is the business of the author to provide. It is deemed by judges an imperfection in a performance if it does not recommend virtue and propriety. The discerning poet esteems it his part to render vice as odious as possible, and to expose to view the deformity of it; to present virtue in its native charms,

and to enforce its dictates. The several passions of the human breast are by him summoned only where they ought, and where Nature herself is the prompter. Hatred for a villain, pity for the unfortunate virtuous, and love for the amiable fair, are no blemishes in reason or humanity.

Plays are useful in another view. They contribute to the polishing and adorning mankind; and politeness is a subordinate species of humanity. It is a point of consequence worth contending for, to keep a nation from a rude and barbarous state, by the assistance of the arts and sciences. Comedies, in particular, may boast this tendency, as greatly subservient to the purpose. In them every vice, every impropriety, every indecorum, is marked and corrected; and by them the spectator may be taught to disapprove in another what he could not discover in his own character.

They are serviceable in displaying the variety of character in the world, and very proper lessons to teach what the dull apprehensions of many would otherwise have scarcely learned from their own observations. Their most obstinate enemies will not surely deny that to be one advantage resulting from them, or deem such an insight into life a point of no moment. It must be acknowledged that this consideration merits every one's regard, as a principal view of education; and it is as indisputable a truth that the high colouring of a play is
more

more striking and affecting than the insipid and faint scenes of common life.

If the reasons above alleged are judged inconclusive, an additional plea, and a material one, remains still behind. Granting that plays are, upon the whole, productive of neither good nor harm, (which is the greatest concession that ought to be made,) yet even in that case they should be tolerated from a consideration of the pleasure and amusement which are derived from them. Some relaxation is requisite in life from the toils and cares that surround us : * ‘ Apollo does not always bend his bow.’ Theatrical exhibitions are, by the generality of the world, esteemed a most agreeable species of entertainment. They are more than bare representations of life ; they are representations embellished with all the decorations of fancy, and cannot fail to charm where taste is not wanting to relish the beauties of genius. This last consideration of pleasure (as it is an innocent pleasure) is a plea that may be as strongly insisted on as any of the foregoing. It will be combated by none but those who have lost their relish for enjoyment, or are naturally sour or insensible in their dispositions. As such, they are not to be regarded in the common light of human beings, but rather as marble statues, devoid of feeling.

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There

* HORAT. lib. ii. od. 10.

— Καὶ γὰρ τὰ τόξα καὶ τὰς λύρας ἀνίστημι, ἵνα ἰσχυροῦται δυνήσῃμεν. PLUTARCH. de educat.

There are certain instances of vice, and certain customs prevailing in society, which every individual in the kingdom would agree to condemn : such instances and such customs, if inquired into, would probably appear to merit the general censure. The encouragement given to the stage is not one of those instances, as the censure passed on it is by no means general. The greater and more sensible half of the world consent to give it their countenance. Those that have denied it their suffrages are much inferior in number, and prejudiced by education, niggardliness, or want of taste, circumstances arising from some peculiar situation in life ; and yet even they, under a change of their education or situation, would probably have entertained opinions of it wide of those they now are found to harbour. No one, with the common human feelings about him, can *naturally* dislike the stage ; and arguments deduced from *reason*, I am persuaded, will not condemn it. An aversion to it must, in course, be regarded only as one of those prejudices of a little mind which a peculiarity of education has given birth to, and deserves to be received with that contempt which is due to want of sentiment.

Upon the whole, though I cannot accede to their opinion who think that plays ought to be discountenanced, yet I will not be so bigotted in their favour as to affirm that mens morals are *much* mended by them in respect to virtue and
vice.

vice. That is a good effect which I can scarcely attribute to knowledge itself in general, and therefore do not much expect to find result from any particular branch of it : but thus much I must again and again insist on in favour of the drama, that as far as it contributes to inspire with generous sentiments, to promote good-nature and the social affections, and to enlarge and refine the mind, we have ample recompence for all the evil it can possibly have introduced.





CHAPTER II.

ON LOVE.

Felices ter et amplius

*Quos irrupta tenet copula, nec malis
Divulsus querimoniis*

Suprema citius solvet amor die.

HOR. od. 18.

THE force and influence of that great tyrant Custom are so powerful, that the effects of it have been often blended with, and mistaken for, those of Nature herself. Amongst other doubts which this confusion has given rise to, it has been with many a question, Whether the passion of LOVE, as confined to one particular object, to the utter exclusion of all others, is not rather a consequence of fashion, than a propensity of nature.

For my own part, with respect to this dispute, both from a superficial view, and from a nice observation, I should esteem it highly probable that it has as real an existence, independently on custom, as anger, or pity, or envy, or any other affection of the mind. First then let it be remarked, that the natural tendency of education (or custom) is to diminish and curb the passions.

passions. In proportion as learning and knowledge advance, instinct and nature retire : reason then bears the sway, which (considered as abstracted from the body) condemns and discards all emotions whatever.

There cannot be a more convincing proof of this, than the characters and conditions of those who have been the strongest, or (if you will) *weakest*, subjects of love. Scarce any journal of occurrences but furnishes instances of some unhappy lovers, who, disappointed in their views, seek that repose from their anxiety in the cold arms of death, which they could not obtain in the embraces of those they loved. The conditions of such unhappy victims (if we take notice) have been generally humble and low, and the parties of an inferior education, and consequently more the sons and daughters of Nature than those who deny the existence of love a foundation in her reign of simplicity. Now it cannot, with any tolerable shew of reason, be supposed, that an ordinary and trifling degree of emotion could prompt a rational being to a remedy which is beset with terrors at all points. Fear is an exceedingly powerful and universal passion; and fear of death (to the vulgar especially) is the strongest of fears: yet, mighty as it is, we often see it superseded by the force of love.

Nor are the ignorant alone subject to such the powerful effects of this passion. It finds its way
to

to the hearts of the polished and well-educated part of the world, though a general taste does more prevail among them, than among the former, and a less partiality to a particular object above another.

It must likewise be considered, that as one passion or view is counteracted and diminished by the presence of another,* the effects of love are rendered less general than they would otherwise be, by the intervention of some other object, which distracts the mind and half engages its attention. This is eminently the case in matrimonial views and contracts. One of the first and principal notions inculcated into children by their parents, is, the necessity of amassing wealth above all things.† With this notion they at first set out, and in it they are confirmed by the practice of their neighbours, and an experience that money will purchase innumerable blessings of life, with which the iniquity of the times will not present them without it. Love and Avarice then divide the empire between them, and according as the heart

of

• — Ira cadit metu.

Ονιπ. Amor. l. ii. el. 13.

† Διὰ τῆτον [ἄργυρον] ἐκ ἀδελφῶς,
Διὰ τῆτον ἔ τοκῆς·
Πολέμοι, φόνοι, δι' αὐτόν.
Τὸ δὲ χεῖρον, ὀλλύμεσθα
Διὰ τῆτον οἱ φιλῆντες.

ANACREON.

of our adventurer is generous or unfeeling, either rival gets the better of the other.

Perhaps, to some readers, that may scarce seem to deserve the name of a passion, which men have in their power to suspend or indulge so much at ease. But this does not amount to an objection. We have abundant examples of mens disregarding or subduing the several feelings of nature, by dint of resolution, or by inattention to their dictates, according as a distraction of views, their opinions of virtue, or their thirst of glory, led them. There are still greater examples of triumph over human weakness: Patriotism, in particular, among the Romans, may seem so to have transported some great souls, as to have raised them above the condition of humanity, and to have realized the fancied superior order of Heroes.* If Regulus could so far condemn his own private feelings and sufferings, when set in competition with his country's good, as to submit to torture and death, rather than in his own opinion approve himself an unworthy son of it, it was no proof of his want of feeling, but of an extraordinary resolution arising from another motive.

It

* Sed nec illo voluntario ad hostes suos reditu, [Reguli,] nec ultimo sive carceris, sive crucis, supplicio, deformata majestas: imo his omnibus admirabilior, quid aliud quam victus de victoribus? atque etiam, quia Carthago non cesserat, de Fortuna triumphavit. — FLORUS.

It is rare indeed that a first-sight view will kindle a flame. Love, as well as other affections, requires time and indulgence to wind it up to such a pitch as to occupy the chief attention of that person who is the subject of it, and deserve the name of a passion. Like the herbs of the field it vegetates and increases, in proportion as it is tended and cherished; and, like them too, it is checked and blasted, if discouraged or neglected.

Love will bear the strictest metaphorical comparison with fire. A single spark will often kindle a high-built pile; but it needs some trifling assistance when it is in so weak a state. It is at first diminutive and scarce to be perceived; but a little fanning and encouragement will kindle it into flame, and convince the by-stander of its powerful force, by an appeal to his quickest senses. In like manner, the origin of many an amour has been equally inconsiderable, and the most trivial action, the most trifling circumstance, observed in either sex, has often shot a spark into the bosom of the other, and produced a flame requiring a river of water to extinguish it, and which has not died away but with the lamp of life itself.

The rise and progress of this passion are different under different circumstances. It not only may not arise from a trifling interview, but even not be conceived till after the conjugal knot is tied. Love is sometimes the fruit of matrimony,

as well as matrimony is of love, and Cupid is the infant offspring of their mutual embraces. This is perhaps the happiest condition of a marriage-state, as no mortifying disappointment lurks behind. If the pairs did not expect a heaven of bliss, they were not alarmed when they found it not: but to find more than there was reason to hope for is doubly a blessing, and the possibility of it is spur sufficient to stir up many an adventurer, who, but for this, would never have proved his fate.

The very constitution of society, the connexions formed between a man and his wife, and the necessity of the care of both of them for their offspring were doubtless foreseen by the great Author of creation. As the case of man differs much from the condition of brutes, a different œconomy was requisite for their situation, and the mutual love of the sexes was the noblest instance of wisdom that could have been exhibited. By this circumstance the interest in the tender babe, which is the fruit of their amour, is common to either parent, and the father is almost equally concerned for its safety and support with the mother that bore it.

The sacred flame that animates a human breast is a noble composition of benevolence to the object beloved, differing from the attachment of brutes, with which it is almost profaneness to compare it. Friendship is the foundation for this noble affection, which, when
the

the contrary sex is the subject of it, by a prejudice of nature, is converted into that particular species called LOVE. It is however possible that the different sexes may conceive a friendship for each other without the least tincture of the other passion; but this will be found to be the case, when a disparity of years, a prepossession in favour of another, or a form which pleases not, intervenes. But let nature have her full scope and direction, let beauty be contrasted with beauty, and youth with youth, and the consequences of such a situation will evince how far the passion of love is of natural growth, provided no circumstance of prejudice diminish the human feelings.

By a bountiful profusion of nature, the causes of love are as various as the different complexions of the human race. Some a temper allures, some a face. The tresses of his mistress, like the chains of a conqueror, hold another enslaved. There are again those who are captivated by the charms of a mind, and behold the virtues through a face, which is (as a late masterly writer expresses himself) ‘their trans-
‘parent covering.’ An arm, a heel, a mein, a size, and a thousand more such distinctions, have, each in its turn, captivated the heart of a hero.*

That

• Nigra μελιχροὺς ἐστὶ ; immunda et fœtida ἄκοσμος
Cælia Παλλάδιος nervosa et lignea δορυχάς

Parvola,

That a man is often partly taken with the elegance of dress in his mistress, and not with her own personal charms alone, and that consequently his attachment in such a case should not be esteemed the thralldom of love but a mere taste for magnificence — even this is an arrant mistake, and I can, upon the authority of one of the greatest masters of love the world ever produced, declare such an opinion erroneous and false. Ornaments of art, as well as the accomplishments of nature, when they really enhance the elegance of appearance in a female, are as much a part of the dear charmer that wears them, as her sparkling eyes, her bosom of snow, or any other snare the syren bears about her. Natural endowments, and artificial ornaments, in such a manner assimilate, as to become inseparable. Dress, according to Ovid, † is to be considered

Parvula, pumilio, Χαρίτων ἴα, tota merum sal ;
 Magna atque immanis, κατάπληξις, plenaque honoris ;
 Balba loqui non quit, τραυλίζει· muta pudens est ;
 At flagrans, odiosa, loquacula, λαμπάδιον fit :
 Ἰσχυρὸν ἐρώμενον tum fit quom vivere non quit
 Fræ macie : ῥαδιὴν vero est jam mortua tussi ;
 At gemina et mammosa Ceres est ipsa ab Iaccho :
 Simula Σιληνὴ ac fatyra 'st ; labiosa φίλημα.

LUCRET. lib. iv.

† Auferimur cultu : gemmis auroque teguntur
 Omnia : pars minima est ipsa puella sui.

Sæpe

sidered in this light, and not as an adventitious or distinct mode of excellence. It is, as he observes, a part of the ægis which the god Cupid carries with him, amongst many other of his warlike accoutrements.

If indeed it had ever been known, that a statue dressed up, or a post adorned with female attire, equally charmed, and gained admirers, with a woman, I will give up the point I contend for, and with chearfulness own myself in the wrong; but till I read of a man's falling in love with a milkmaid's garland, or a polished golden image, I must insist on considering the dress of a woman as a part of her person.

Upon a recapitulation in my own mind of the arguments I have urged to refute the deniers of the existence of Love, it occurred to me how much easier a task it would have been for some of the lovely fair ones I have been talking of, with that powerful persuasion, the eloquence of looks and ornaments, which nature and art combine to lend them, to have converted these infidels. † Before such conviction as they could afford, the sophistry of argument would appear dry and impertinent,

Sæpe ubi sit quod amas, inter tam multa, requiras.

Decipit hac oculos ægide dives amor.

Ov. Rem. Am. lib. i.

† Ουγάτηρ ἐπίγαμῳ, καὶ ὅλως μηδὲν λαλῇ,
Διὰ τῆ σιωπᾶν πλεῖστα περὶ αὐτῆς λίγει.

MENAND. 9.

pertinent, and all I have advanced as empty words: but alas! our philosophers are not so good as they ought to be — they seldom appear at a church, where the fair shew themselves to the greatest advantage; and an assembly is by much too trifling for a stoic. As the punishment due to their crimes, their inflexible obstinacy, and insensibility, may they persist in their course therein, and never love!



CHAPTER



CHAPTER III.

ON HAPPINESS.

Et a i voli troppo alti et repentini

Sogliono i preciptii esser vicini.

TASSO.

‘**H**APPINESS (says an ancient writer) bears the semblance of satisfaction and perfection, being the ultimate aim of all our actions.’ * How to arrive at it is the grand question, the great business of life : but it is universally agreed, that without a contented mind we catch at a shadow in the pursuit of it. He that is not tolerably easy in every station, will never be perfectly satisfied in any.

Nothing is more frequent amongst moral writers than to represent content, a quality merely constitutional, as a virtue and a duty, and discontent, as a vice or a crime, a repugnance to the dispensations of heaven, and a tacit rebellion against its decrees. How far this idea is just, I shall not now inquire ; but whether it be reasonable or not, sure I am it is a lesson as little regarded as any that ever flowed from

Τέλειον δὲ τι φαίνεται καὶ ἀνταρξὶς ἡ εὐδαιμονία, τῶν
πρακτικῶν ἔσα τέλῃ. — ARISTOT. Eth. lib. 1.

from the pen of a moralist. To oppose mens restlessness in search after happiness, is to stem a torrent, and to barely enjoin content is to talk in an unknown tongue.

In all our attempts to correct and inform we should consider it as an essential point to humour the objects of our endeavours, without which all our precepts are lost in air. The most cogent and persuasive rhetoric that can be used, is to speak to the utility and self-love of mankind; to make appear that our precepts are conducive to the desired end; that happiness is equally the desideratum of both writer and reader. The disciple of this reasoning will listen with attention to such a promising preceptor, and eagerly swallow a potion that is sweetened to his palate, as preferable to the bitter draught administered by the hand of a stoic. — And whence, it may justly be asked, can be derived a more powerful persuasive in favour of content, (which is the essence of happiness,) than from a consideration of the *nearly equal distribution of it amongst the whole human race?*

That this position of a nearly equal share of felicity is no chimæra, will, I trust, be admitted by every one who thoroughly examines it at all points, and considers it in every view. Arguments deduced from actual pleasure and pain, if we attentively consider those sensations, suggest reasons to confirm the supposition. Let us trace things to their very source. Pain (which

is in many cases the strongest of those two sensations) diminishes in a certain ratio, proportioned to the time it has been endured, by the very constitution of nature. This is not only the case in the more slight and common instances, in the little inconveniences of life, but even in such as strike with horror at the bare mention of them. As a proof of it may be urged a memorable circumstance relating to one of the most striking examples of pain that the rigour of law could inflict, in the execution of a notorious criminal in France; * who, after he had sustained part of the dreadful punishment denounced against him, was asked a few questions relating to the pain he had felt. Among other particulars of his answers is one which has an intimate connexion with the present argument. He declared that even under this most intense circumstance of misery, after he had been some little time in torture, his sense of pain became by degrees so languid, as in a great measure to diminish the rigour of his sentence. But lest my gentle reader should be shocked at the cruelty of the example here given, I will dismiss it, and observe that every situation in nature is pregnant with such proofs. As the hands become hard with labour, the body and mind both grow callous and insensible to pain: a circumstance which

* Mandrin, a famous smuggler, who was broke on the wheel for murder and other crimes — A sentence which he bore with a fortitude that would have done honour to innocence.

which tends to alleviate the sufferings of the miserable in every degree, by a peculiar blessing of nature. I have chosen to speak chiefly of pain, as it appeared to me the stronger instance of sensation: not but that pleasure (which is the immediate point in question) would have equally answered the purpose of conviction. The sweetness of honey, when first it is tasted, is exquisite; but repeated doses of it at last become palling and nauseous. There are certain bounds of pleasure and pain which cannot be passed or continued in their intensity: when arrived at those degrees, they stop, and gradually die away.

So much being premised, we may draw a consequent inference, too obvious to be denied, as the pleasures of body and mind in such manner represent each other, as to admit of the same arguments and observations — The conclusion I mean is, that however flattering the state of one man appears to another who is less distinguished by the favours of Fortune, or more involved in the hurries and business of life, yet it by no means follows that the former is happier than the latter. Business employs the load of time; wants are the forerunners of wishes, and wishes of enjoyment. The most elevated station, the most extensive possessions, the most exalted glory, which is the Elysium of heroes, pall and fade at last. The king on his throne surfeits with honour; he that has all earthly blessings at his command, has no more left to covet and raise his hopes: like Alexander, he finds that one world's

extent will not fill up his wishes. It is not the nature of our constitution to keep up an even and constant zest for enjoyment; and the more intense the pleasure is, the sooner the fibres of sensibility are broken.

It must be allowed that a transition from a present to a more desired state constitutes a short-lived happiness; but it is at the commencement of our change we must expect it. Afterwards we drop from the summit of our wishes, as from a high tower, measuring our fall by the degree of impatience with which we soared to our desires.

Happiness then is content under another name. Without it a man cannot be happy, and with it it is impossible he should be miserable. A consideration of this truth (though it is not expected it should prevent us from snatching at every little innocent whim that floats within our reach) is a strong argument for resisting inordinate and unattainable desires, which, like a vulture, prey continually on the vitals of the ambitious and restless.* If human nature requires sometimes a recreation, to keep off a general stagnation and torpor, we should marshal and discipline our desires, and direct them in

* *Nam petere imperium quod inane 'st, nec datur unquam,*

Atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,

Hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte

Saxum ———

LUCRET. lib. III.

in their career. Custom is a potent master, and the powers and functions of body and mind, by a little perseverance, will submit to its controul.

Had men of letters in the several ages of the world been duly sensible of this one truth, *the nearly equal distribution of happiness*, such a confusion of systems had never been introduced, as the philosophers have formed, in their pursuit after that one great object of human wishes. School had not been set up against school, and system against system. The Stoic had not preached up apathy, as the only means of attaining it, and the Epicurean sensual delights. Cooler reason had reigned among men, and common sense been the standard of truth and touchstone of absurdity. Content, which is essential happiness, would have continued in their steady course those whose ill-judged and overweening expectations led astray after such a share of it as no situation in life will afford. Ambition, the Fury that stirs up envy and contention, would not have urged on the restless and greedy minds of selfish men to invade the property of an envied neighbour. The shepherd would have been pleased with his flock, and the lord of one kingdom satisfied without aspiring after universal monarchy, and sometimes purchasing to himself the mortification of disappointment.

The noblest gift of heaven is content. Riches and honour are but the flattering promisers of what content alone can give. Viewed through the medium of content, kings and peasants are seen on a level, and the cot suffers no diminution when set by the side of the crown. The one is not despised, nor the other envied : but they are equally considered as accompanied with their share of felicity.

*He never wants who never wish'd for more :
Who ever said an anchoret was poor ?*

But, after all, if happiness is so easily to be attained, why will not every one purchase it at the price of his ambition ? — Alas ! prejudice is blind, and passion is strong. Men are with difficulty persuaded out of notions interwoven with their constitutions. It is easy to form an untinctured mind, but not easy to dispossess it of the strong garrison of early prejudice, which, as a lawless tyrant, rules and directs the actions and opinions. But though there are few who can be persuaded out of their favourite notions, the felicity of content may not be disputed. Some have actually *felt* the force of it, which others have not been able to *conceive*. Even should the advocate of content himself, the dictating moralist, by his unbridled wishes give the lie to his doctrine, content is still the same only parent of happiness it ever was, and
no

no substitute whatever can be found to represent it.

Weighty and natural as this truth is, it will seldom convert; and the precepts that enjoin it are looked on as the rust and rubbish of chimerical morality. Regarding desires which rest on probability as the principal sources of pleasure, men will not remember that unreasonable longings are the parents of pain. I will therefore dismiss my preaching, and not farther encumber a simple truth with needless remarks on it, lest the dull clothing it wears should contribute to scare away those who might otherwise be tempted to embrace it.



C 3 CHAPTER



CHAPTER IV.

ON BIGOTRY.

*For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight :
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.*

POPE.

THERE is not on earth a blessing which the perverseness of man has not, at times, converted to a curse. Religion itself, which derives its birth from heaven, and is intended to perfect what Nature has laid the foundation for, has among other things, by peculiar blindness and obstinacy, been oft pressed into the service of murderers, cheats, and debauchees.*

The greatest ornament of humanity is a propensity to universal charity and benevolence : it is the noblest instinct Nature has given us, the great foundation whereon all other virtues are to be built, and the only proper standard by which

we

* Literally so. Under the first of these denominations may be comprized the herd of persecutors. Oracular priests have some right and title to the second appellation of *cheats* : and Bacchanalians, and the more modern sects, who keep their love-feasts, or *agapai*, are to be considered as under the third distinction of *debauchees*. — A hopeful tribe indeed, to grace the cause of religion !

we must estimate them. The first object then, which religion, as the assistant of nature, ought to have in view, after gratitude to the divine Author of our being is satisfied, is to perfect this universal love, to harmonize and attune the soul to its accents, and extend its influence over the whole human race.

The great aim of religion being thus defined, what ideas must a rational man entertain of the bigotted, persecuting, uncharitable, sectaries, that disgrace that noble principle, by assuming its sacred name and authority? Rather than esteem them as having perfected and exalted the human condition above its natural standard, he must reflect on them as degrading it to a level with the brute creation, whose proper province it is to ravage and destroy.

Were it indeed the business of religion to generate nothing but malice and cruelty, it would be a hopeful assistant to human weakness. The common abuse and misapplication of the passions, when men are not incited by external and adventitious causes to animosity and strife, are sufficiently destructive of peace and harmony, without adding fuel to flame. The sum of religion being comprized in gratitude to God, and love to man, it can never be the will of the Deity, that the latter division of it should be given up to shew a zeal for the former: nor can it be supposed that he created, in order that man might persecute and destroy the work of his hands. Yet, ab-

fur'd as this picture of religious zealots may appear, it is an exact caricature of the pious murderers who have inlisted under the banner of religion.

Modes of faith, and exterior forms of worship, are but the connexions and bands by which religion is compacted, and the frame or outward shell in which the more sacred and essential part is deposited ; an accidental ornament, but no necessary and indispensable adjunct. He, therefore, that pleads the cause of externals as equally a duty with the pure and simple parts of worship, sets up the shadow in competition with the substance, and dishonours the cause he professes to serve. Religion receives no sanction from rites, but rites are consecrated by religion, which are no farther proper than they contribute to its advancement. To suppose that the Deity requires as indispensable, and regards as important, what in the bare eye of reason, and to a moderate share of understanding, appears trivial and idle, is derogatory from his wisdom, and a far greater affront to his glory, than to banish for ever every species of ceremony from his worship. But to persecute and torment others on these accounts ; to imprison and slay, to hate and detest, our fellow-creatures, for not adopting the same precise form of words in their oaths of fidelity and expressions of homage to their great Superior, and to shelter our cruelty under the sanction

tion of his sacred will, is treason against his divine nature and undesigned blasphemy. The great object of our adoration is but one, and every form in which he beholds his worshipper is accepted, when sanctified by purity of intention and an upright heart.*

As it is the characteristic of superstition to set up the pageantry of religion in opposition to the essence, it may, with a degree of propriety, be termed *idolatry*. Wherein can be the difference whether we worship and adore images, which are the works of our hands, or idolize and doat on the inventions of our brain? If gratitude to himself, and love to one another, be all the Deity requires at our hands, to remove those virtues, in order to give place to our own fond conceits, is actual idolatry.

If we examine into the characters of bigots in general, far from finding them to be persons

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of

* Quin damus id superis, de magna quod dare lance
Non possit magni Messallæ lippa propago,
Compositum jus fasque animi, sanctosque recessus
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto?
Hæc cedo admoveam templis, et farre litabo.

PERSIUS, sat. II.

Animadverto enim etiam deos ipsos non tam accuratis adorantium precibus, quam innocentia et sanctitate, lætari; gratioremque existimari qui delubris eorum puram castamque mentem, quam qui meditatum carmen, intulerit.

PLIN. paneg.

of greater virtues than others, we can see in them nothing that is amiable and laudable. Than these exists not a more disagreeable and odious tribe; and in such a soil generally flourish the more ignoble passions, whose growth, with respect to our neighbours, by virtue's laws, demand to be curbed, and not encouraged. It is observable that these animals are, some ill-natured, others covetous, others suspicious, others revengeful, others envious and spiteful, and all obstinate and perverse, rigid and unyielding. But prejudice is blind: could it but see truth and propriety, view things in their genuine colours, and discover its own deformity, it would be no longer prejudice.*

It is not enough for the heated zealot that he alone enjoys his peculiar notions and customs: his fury hurries him farther, and he discards the virtues of religion, meekness, charity, and universal love, which are the sweetest incense man can offer at the altar, to make room for the apish quackery of superstition. He is not content alone to fall prostrate before the idol himself has set up, but he must compel others to partake in his idolatry.

The

* *Nihil enim in speciem fallacius est quam prava religio. Ubi deorum numen prætenditur sceleribus, subit animos timor, ne, fraudibus humanis vindicandis, divini juris aliquid immistum violamus.*
Conf. ap. Liv. dec. 4.

The numerous evils distempered zeal has given birth to in the world, at many different periods of time, are not unknown to any one the least conversant in history. They piously murdered and piously tortured the meek and conscientious professors of harmless opinions. It was for the glory of God that Calvin plotted the death of Castalio, because he dissented from his ridiculous absurdities; and for the glory of God the persecuting Catholics spread ravage and desolation among the noblest of his works, the upright and innocent, whose meekness would not even suffer them to make a just resistance to their unfeeling tormentors.

The subject of these complaints is not become stale. If we want recent instances of religious barbarity, we need but give a glance at some neighbouring kingdoms, to see it in all its blackness. Poland presents us with a scene of inexpressible confusion: natives of the kingdom, undutiful and rebellious children, tearing up the bowels of their mother country; and their unhappy sovereign, unable to heal these divisions, ready to fly for protection to a neighbour kingdom. In Spain and Portugal we have been in our times entertained with the cruelties of an Inquisition; and the cloven tongues of the Holy Ghost have been impiously counterfeited by flames of real fire.

Supposing we were to grant that religion allowed severity to *compel men to come in*, provided

they could thereby effect their purpose of making converts ; yet it is not to be imagined that those who have withstood all the artillery of their arguments can be moved by an exertion of their rage and malice. Such a carriage to their disciples could only be productive of hypocrisy and insincerity. The opinions of a man are not under his controul : he cannot change them as a chamæleon changes his skin. What is not in his power, he can never be accountable for ; and bare professions are of no weight or value. We may add to these reasons the perverseness of party spirit, which is only increased by the attempts of compulsion.

There are, on the contrary, advocates for ceremony as a subordinate part of religion ; as a form in which it should be seen and known ; as proper to entice and assemble such for its votaries as would not otherwise, through slowness of apprehension, have discovered its residence ; and as conducing to confirm the minds of those who are enlisted in its service. With them I readily concur. The undiscerning minds of the vulgar are not sufficiently refined to relish the sentimental and pure dictates of religion without externals : something striking and visible must be adopted, which is brought down on a level with their capacities. What they do not comprehend can never please them ; and what does not please them will not usurp their attention. But force must not be allowed a share in our schemes, any
more

more than the laws require in the administration of justice.

Externals then, with persons of judgement, are to be considered only as instruments or assistants of religion, not as actually a constituent part of it. Under that view they are tolerable, useful, and in some cases necessary. But as punctilios in our behaviour one towards another, mere compliments of politeness, are not honoured with the name of friendship, so neither are ceremonies in religion dignified with the appellation of religion; but they should be used or neglected, curtailed or increased, as the caprice of mankind and the situation of a people are judged to require.

I have been the more particular in reflexions that must be obvious to any person of sense, on account of the great prevalence of religious prejudice and animosity amongst some men of genius and learning, who have, to the disgrace of both religion and learning, espoused the cause of persecution, vainly supposing, that while they were the authors of misery and death to those of a different opinion, they were laying the foundation of life and felicity for themselves. And how ever often such remarks have been echoed by different writers, the dignity of the subject claims all the attention that has been paid to it, as a point of moment in the manners of a nation. It is true, actual persecution by fire and sword is not in fashion in our
happy

happy country; but the seeds of it still remain in the breast of many a bigot, and need only the fostering care of public encouragement to bring them to maturity. Secret hatred, private malice, is still rankling at the heart, and ready to spread its venom where want of opportunity now denies it access. Want of opportunity to exercise vice, when the intention is not wanted, is not to be pleaded in excuse. If the intention of a man is set on mischief, he has already virtually incurred that guilt which external circumstances alone prevented. Could we view his heart, we should discover in it the hideous train of forms, slaughter and bloodshed, stripes and tortures,* pictured in their proper colours, and threatening to break out of their confinement, as did the evils from Pandora's box, to annoy mankind.

With double care ought every attempt to introduce the Romish religion among us to be opposed. To stop their progress, it were even justifiable (as it would be for the good of mankind) to use a reasonable severity to those who should dare to propagate their notions, as they are to be considered in some respects as criminals.

* *Neque frustra præstantissimus sapientiæ [Plato, de repub.] firmare solitus est: Si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse aspici laniatus et ictus; quando ut corpora verberibus, ita sævitia, libidine, malis consultis, animus dilaceretur.*

TACIT. Annal. l. 6.

nals. The treatment they unjustly shew to persons of a different communion, might with propriety be retorted on them.

From the late dispersion of the Jesuits over Europe, alarms were raised in the minds of several, and fears that their endeavours and insinuations would meet with success: but let us hope, for the honour of our nation, that their tenets have too odious an appearance ever to gain proselytes among us. And if they are seen in their native and genuine characters, they certainly must make that odious appearance, as they not only persecute in order to favour their advances, but teach their disciples to do the same, as a tenet of their religion.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER V.

ON DEISTICAL PUBLICATIONS.

Ita res poposcit, ut ferox populus deorum metu mitigaretur. FIORUS. —

Tentat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas.

LUCRET.

THOUGH I all along profess myself a friend to freedom in opinions, I yet am led to think there are certain instances of discovering that freedom, which may be of dangerous tendency when they come under the notice of weak, unsettled, minds. A caution of this kind may not improperly be recommended to those writers who have taken upon them the task of examining and exploding the established religion of their country.

That a man is entitled to the privilege of thinking and examining for himself before he gives his assent to any point in debate, is indisputable, and none but a bigot would go about to deny it. It is not only no crime, but the duty of a reasonable being to exercise the talent he has received, and improve his understanding; and if his own reflexion informs him that what is palmed on him as a divine truth gives the lie to his reason, he must be weak indeed to slight what ought to be his strongest conviction. The most

most strenuous advocates for the wildest scheme of doctrine that ever was formed have some recourse to reason as the conductor to the points they have undertaken to support, and appeal to it as the higher tribunal. We have all imaginable cause, then, to consult this guide, and not the shadow of a plea why we are to reject its remonstrances. The medicine is avowedly good; but it is best in the hands of a skilful physician.

Supposing it even a misfortune to entertain notions repugnant to established doctrines, (as I have already observed,) that can never be imputed as a crime which is not in our power. The opinions of a man are not of his own making, any more than the face he bears about him. They are accidents arising from the circumstances he is beset with, which irresistibly compel his assent. To suppose that the Deity can be offended with what he cannot help, is to attribute to him a weakness and injustice which would be a blot in the character of a man. I will allow our deists the full extent of this argument: I will make them every concession of this kind they can desire. They have a licence from the dictates of common sense to think for themselves: but it does not follow, that they should propagate such opinions as would only tend to disturb the repose of a nation.

The enemies of the Christian faith are particularly to blame, as it is a profession tending to promote

promote nothing but virtue and goodness, when perfectly understood, and received in its genuine spirit and meaning. The precepts of it recommend meekness, virtue, and universal benevolence, which are the soul of religion, as the most important duties required of its professors, and not as subordinate and trivial qualifications; in opposition to graceless and persecuting zealots: and if there are litigated points among its different sectaries, they are such as affect not morality, and had their rise in the blindness and obstinacy of mankind.

The troubles attending a change in religion (granting it in the power of deists to prove Christianity false) are not desirable objects of a nation's wishes; and sure I am, no better substitute could be composed, to humanize and correct mankind. Were Christianity replete with exhortations to hate and persecute for opinions; to treat those that dissent from its doctrines with severity and malice; or even not highly commendatory of virtue, and a foe to vice, it would be incumbent on every one with all his might to oppose its progress in the world. But no such charge can be brought against the most virtuous system of religion that ever was compiled; a religion whose precepts allow not even a competition between the life and virtue of its professors, but command to lose our existence rather than desert the cause for which we exist.

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I have elsewhere observed, that the minds of the ignorant are not sufficiently refined to relish a merely sentimental religion. Deism is by much too simple to captivate their ideas. A form of religion is found necessary, containing promises and threatenings in a particular manner expressed, rewards and punishments in peculiar form denounced, and even ceremonies, religion's apes,* as a part of the system recommended to their observance. On this account (not unwisely) did Origen assert the propriety of preaching eternal punishment for the wicked, though such a doctrine, in his opinion, arraigned the justice of the Deity. None but a delicate mind, he was sensible, could be capable of delicate notions. The lower order of people, whose reason is a lamer guide to them than their passions,† as being rude and unrefined, are more to be influenced by hopes and fears excited by the apprehensions of divine and human justice, than charmed with the beauty and propriety of virtue. And this notion is reinforced by a precedent set by Nature herself, who has

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• Nulla res efficacius *multitudinem* regit quam
superstitio : alioquin impotens, sæva, mutabilis,
melius vatibus quam ducibus suis paret.

Q. CURT. l. 4.

† Quantunque debil freno a mezzo il corso
Animoso destrier spesso raccolga,
Raro è però che di ragione il morso
Libidinosa furia adietro volga.

ARIOSTO.

not chosen to entrust the care of a new-born babe to the common humanity and reason of its parent, but has implanted a passion extraordinary to secure its preservation ; and even, with seeming cruelty, animated that passion by the pangs and throes of labour.*

Together with the abolition of an established form, would follow the extinction of religion in general, in a great degree. When unruly tempers are once set free, they know no bounds to their career :

*Ask where's the north ? At York 'tis on the Tweed,
In Scotland at the Orcades, and there*

At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.

If men are told that this or that is a mere human invention, and of no intrinsic value, they are too prone to regard the whole scheme of morality as an imposition. It is not safe to leave the formation of religion to the vulgar, who would make it square with their opinions, instead of correcting themselves by its precepts, and by these means the bridle would be taken away from every unruly affection. A mistaken freedom, contracted from a misconstruction of natural religion, would probably introduce amongst them a contempt for virtue itself. Like the dove, when they forsake the ark, they have no resting-place for

* "Ετι δὲ τὰ ἐπιπόνως γινόμενα πάντες μᾶλλον εἰργασιν, οἷον καὶ τὰ χρήματα οἱ κτησάμενοι τῶν παραλαβόντων. Δοκίῃ δὲ τὸ μὲν ἴνυ πάσχειν ἄπορον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ ἴνυ ποιεῖν ἐργῶδες· διὰ ταῦτα δὲ καὶ αἱ μηλῆρες φιλοτεχνικώτεραι, ἐπιποινώτερα γὰρ ἢ γίνονται. ARISTOT. Eth. ix.

for the sole of their foot. But men are not so abandoned, (not even the viciously inclined) as readily to run counter to what they esteem a command of heaven. Religious injunctions may sometimes bind, even against inclination.

It is worthy of observation too, that the ignorant confound deism with atheism : they know no distinction between them. An author that takes up his pen to write against Christianity is vulgarly supposed to espouse the cause of atheism, and to renounce all obligations whatever. That this is a fact, a little observation will evince : and that it must be an unfortunate circumstance with weak minds, will be readily allowed.

Men have been in all ages alarmed with the cry of *priestcraft*, and warned to be cautious how they are bubbled out of their reason and senses : in consequence, when they find that writers of learning and abilities have endeavoured to fix this charge on the professors of Christianity, they are ready enough to apply the caution that has been, time immemorial, dinned into their ears. That the clergy take the part of the established confession, is construed only as an exercise of their trade, as a defence of what yields first-fruits for themselves and families, and supplies the comforts of life. Their sincerity and learning are supposed to be enlisted in this cause, and of no avail to the promotion of truth and the declaration of their real opinions.

nions. But the writings of deists, they are led to think, can have no such imputation laid to their charge, as they have no benefices to fight for, and no apparent views to serve but the defence of their real sentiments. Hence the friends of deism have a pass on Christian writers, supposing their causes equally defensible.

The greater half of mankind, we all know, are biassed in their judgements by the opinions of others, whom they esteem wiser than themselves: they are particularly allured by the glare of what is bold and striking; and charmed with novelty above all things. Inducements like these, seasoned with proclamations of liberty, (particularly to Englishmen) are too strong to suffer resistance. *Liberty* is a word of such an enchanting sound, that, in defence of it, they will forfeit every other blessing, and break thro' the most sacred ties. They will pay their adoration to any deity that promises them liberty. The most intoxicating potion of the most deadly liquid is deified and adored, because it affords them a temporary liberty, and can boast inspiring qualities which were not to be found in the river-gods of old.

My love for candor will not allow me to think the writers I have been here censuring were influenced by motives to endeavour after the corruption of a people, as has been charged to them by some over-zealous defenders of Christianity. They were doubtless wrought on
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by a conviction which they supposed proceeded from the fountain of truth itself, and which they were willing to communicate to the rest of the world, that they might also share in the blessings they fondly imagined they had discovered — A humour this, resembling that of the Lydian king Candaules, who was so smitten with the hidden beauties of his royal consort, that he was tempted to expose her to his confident Gyges in the pure state of nature, that he also might see her heaven of charms, and be a witness of his happiness. — The event of either conduct is of fatal consequence. The folly of the Lydian monarch cost him his life, by the revenge of his queen, and fixed his crown on the head of the conscious friend. The unadvised freedom of the deist, by his fondness for communicating his blessings, lets loose the people and disturbs the state.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER VI.

ON POLITENESS.

— *Affentatio, vitiorum adjutrix, procul amoveatur; quæ non modo amico, sed ne libero quidem digna est.* Cic. de amic.

ANIMADVERSIONS on real and pretended religion, by a resemblance between the two principles, naturally lead to reflexions on real and pretended friendship. In considering the observations I had made on the one, I was insensibly drawn to reflect on the other, as ceremonies in either, with many people, are prized and adopted as the essence of those noble principles themselves, to the great detriment and disgrace of the amiable causes they were invented to serve.

If a true idea of politeness had been generally entertained, ceremony had never so universally usurped the place of friendship as it has been unfortunately found to do. Had the world been sufficiently aware that it is no farther of use than as it is subservient to rendering society agreeable, the superfluities of it had been long ago discarded.

There is a season for all things, according to the old proverb. The time when formal politeness

ness is tolerable, is at the first contractions of friendship : after which it is to be considered only as a burdensome embargo. When perfect strangers are joined, by accident, in company together, intemperate freedom is improper, and some little ceremony is required to keep the different parties in countenance. In such cases a moderate share of it will be found not only not troublesome, but even desirable.

But ceremony is not confined within these restrictions. It is an universal complaint urged against the formal visits of acquaintance that freedom is denied the visitants on each side : they are unhappy under the constraint of behaviour which the mode of politeness imposes on them, and, regarding such interviews as a mere debt, express their satisfaction at the expiration of their thralldom. One might have supposed that the natural evils of life had been sufficient, without the invention of artificial plagues ; but the world, it may be presumed, has been generally of a different opinion, and therefore set up ceremony as a tax on friendship.

The misfortune which principally causes this complaint, is, that neither party is hardy enough to set the laudable example of freedom. One will not be rude, and another will not be rude, and by these means a general inconvenience is kept up, to the torment of all parties : whereas repeated experience daily proves, that

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the first advances to freedom are always commended by the opposite party which receives them, and construed as the effects of good-nature and an obliging disposition : they that throw off reserve ever meet with applause : and yet (such is human perverseness!) ceremony is still the model of good-breeding.

If politeness be a *method of rendering the mutual communications of friendship agreeable*, (which is the only interpretation it can bear) when it assumes a form that is displeasing to our friend, it becomes, in the strictest sense, want of good-breeding, instead of a mark of it. Wherein can be the difference whether my friend affronts me by a box on the ear, or by an insufferable load of formalities, if my visit to him is rendered equally disagreeable by either conduct? In some cases, I believe, the box on the ear would be the more desirable compliment of the two, as it would be the fairest plea for a dismissal from purgatory.

Pride is one of the strongest enemies to true friendship, and ceremony is always the forerunner of pride. Ceremonies are, as it were, the pages of honour to pride, and help to keep up that state which the proud man is not willing should be infringed by the freedom of an inferior. Every instance of ceremony is regarded as a token of pride which commands a return of reserve, and consequently must prove prejudicial to friendship. The proudest men, it is a
constant

constant remark, are ever the most observant of punctilios in behaviour.

To the credit of freedom it may be observed, that the higher ranks of people are less ceremonious in private than the middle class in life; amongst whom ceremony is now principally assumed, as the cast-off cloaths of the great. A citizen and his wife frequently display more airs, and require more homage from their inferiors and dependants, than those who can boast noble blood. Their inferiority is the very cause of this. What they want in dignity, they are desirous of making up in parade. The rank of a nobleman commands respect, without any pains of his to create it; whilst the condition of a tradesman requires labour to produce it. In the one instance the respect that is paid is genuine and natural; in the other it is feigned and laboured.

It must be allowed, notwithstanding, that ceremony appears to be on the decline. The charge brought against it might have been urged some time since with still greater propriety than at present. However, there is yet too much formality observed for a free and open-hearted man to submit to. Real friendship needs not its assistance, and when it is only pretended, there is nothing but hypocrisy; which is odious to an ingenuous mind.

It may be observed to the advantage of our neighbours the French, that notwithstanding

their rage for compliment, they are sooner acquainted, and have more ease in their manner, than the natives of our country. They have an agreeable impudence (not in all instances approved by the modesty of English ladies) which soon puts constraint to flight; and it were to be wished a due share of it enlivened our English conversation.

The best receipt to promote freedom in those we converse with, is to set the example of it ourselves; which seldom fails of the desired effect. The world are naturally fond of freedom, however they have combined to banish it from society. It is at best considered but as a lesson to learn, and as a task to submit to, to conform to all the rules of precision which custom seems to have exacted: but men are content to run the gantelope, rather than in the eyes of the ceremonious approve themselves *savages*, as they would otherwise be termed by the critics of behaviour.

Reserve has its season, without appearing where it is not agreeable. There are, on the other hand, examples of freedom, at which the most intimate friends may conceive disgust, and which are sometimes shewn, to the confusion even of familiars. Under the mask of friendship impertinent curiosity and familiarity are sometimes indulged to excess. One friend, it is presumed, cannot be offended at any liberty taken by another: he may pry into secrets, give
impertinent

impertinent advice almost in the form of a command, unasked, and take a disapprobation of his advice amiss : which is a humour that has its examples. In instances of this kind, friends are as much under obligations of propriety and reserve as the greatest stranger. Be it observed, even superfluous ceremony itself is to be discarded only on account of the trouble it creates between man and man : by parity of reason, no freedoms should be taken which are equally a burden : one man should not affront another with the impertinence of freedom, any more than with the formalities of compliment.

Real politeness, politeness which deserves that appellation, being an inferior branch of humanity, merits great encomiums : but no behaviour whatever ought to be dignified with that name which is calculated only to give pain and trouble. The rules of it are easily understood, as being very simple and natural. What formalities we do not relish ourselves, we have no right to suppose will be agreeable to our friend ; and what impertinences we disapprove in others, we ourselves should never be guilty of. This general rule (which is also the great standard of all moral justice) can seldom fail of pleasing when it is strictly observed.

In a word, politeness is the utmost ease in our own deportment, and an endeavour to promote it in others, by equally shunning the rude

and forbidding salutes of a surly brute, the cold and uninviting indifference of a careless friend, and the insufferable chatter of a mere compliment-monger. Thus defined, it is the most agreeable invention that can be imagined, and should on no account be slighted, as the happiness of those we are connected with is in some measure concerned therein: and, in such a form, it will be neither a task to shew it, nor a pain to suffer it: the school for it will be our own experience and inclination, and the precepts of it legible to the most cursory observation.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER VII.

ON WAR.

Candida pax homines, trux decet ira feras.

OVID. Amor. 2.

IT is matter of much surprise, that after all the lessons of morality to inculcate justice and a virtuous deportment between individuals; after all the execrations, with general consent, denounced against those that infringe and violate the social compact by which harmony reigns among men; after the strictest penalties enacted against crimes, from murder down to the most trifling instances of fraud; so little concern should have been in all ages expressed for the greatest example of violation, by the wantonness of WAR, that can sully the human character.

A robber (as the pirate Dionides well observed to Alexander, a greater offender than himself,) who alone, or, at most, with a few associates, attacks a single traveller and plunders him, is stigmatized with the most odious names language can furnish, is treated with all the severity law can inflict, and at last pays his life, as the most valuable forfeit he is in a condition to make, for his crime: but an ambitious prince,

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whose wants are supplied even before they arise, who has no hunger to satisfy, and no apprehensions of indigence to disturb his repose, may, because incircled with a diadem, legally slaughter armies of thousands, make widows of wives, and orphans of children, and render countries, before happy and flourishing, the seats of desolation and the burying-places of those who were born to cultivate and enjoy them: and (as if rewards were due to crimes) he is for this applauded with the acclamations of a multitude, as a glorious conqueror, and an ornament to human nature — Nefarious, though sanctified, enemy of mankind! detested, though enthroned, destroyer!

The brute creation, even the fiercest among them, express a tenderness for those of their own species;* but man, adorned with reason, enabled to distinguish virtue and vice, softened by nature, and fitted to receive the tender impressions of compassion, (a privilege denied to brutes) forgetting the excellence of his character, drinks the blood of man, and sacrifices the actual lives of his fellow-creatures, to procure himself a mean, because unmerited, honour whilst alive, and an imaginary life after death. But none but the spirit of a destroyer can venerate the actions of a destroyer: if these
licensed

* *Indica tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem
Perpetuam: sævis inter se convenit urfis.*

JUVEN. sat. XV.

licensed murderers ever receive their laurels, it is from such hands as modest virtue would not consent to accept them from.

When the tyger ranges over the woods to seek his prey, he has hunger for his apology, and, as if to shame the human species, abstains from the blood of tygers : want impels him, and he pursues the only course his situation presents for his relief : nature bids him devour, and he obeys. His hunger satisfied, he lays him by, nor repeats his slaughter, till commanded by a second summons from within, which is his only conscience. ——— Ye ruthless sons of ambition, have you so fair a plea for your cruelties ? can you plead hunger and ignorance, nature and necessity, in defence of your crimes ? Were ye as obedient to Nature as he, * did ye as kindly receive the tender feelings she imparts to your species, instead of staining your hands with the blood of your fellow-creatures, you would bathe their wounds with your tears, and heal them with the balm of compassion !

The most unfeeling and inconsiderate of these heroes would without hesitation condemn a murderer when brought before him, and sub-

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scribe

* Οὐδεὶς ὅστις ἐκ ἀπαραγμονίστερόν τῶν βίων ἰαχί μοι τῆ ἀνθρωπείᾳ, μόναις ταῖς φυσικαῖς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ χρείαις ἰμμεμετῆμεν· τελώνην δὲ ἴππου, ἢ συκοφάντην βάρταρον, ἢ σοφιστὴν χολοῖον, ἢ ὀψοπωτὸν κώνωπα, ἢ κίμαιδιν ἀλεκτρούνα, καὶ τ᾽ ἄλλα ὅσα ὑμεῖς ἐπιτιθεύετε, ἐκ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺς ἐκείνοις. LUCIAN. [Gallus loquitur.]

scribe his execution ; but (such is the blind partiality of men in their own favour !) would never once reflect, that in this action of justice a great murderer was signing the doom of a little one, and that the criminal at the bar was far more innocent than the judge who condemned him. We may ask, Is murder less murder because committed by wholesale ? Is it a crime to kill one man, and a virtue to slaughter thousands ? Are hunger and want, anger and resentment, detestable motives to a cruel deed, and is vanity, the emptiest of all passions, the most unreasonable of all impulses, a sufficient, a just, and an honourable motive ?

Ambition, it will be said, is noble, and the criterion of a great mind. Most true it is a mark of greatness when under the discipline of reason and direction of justice : ambition with principle is a noble passion. But the ambition of a professed warrior, whose glory is measured only by the length of his sword, is infernal ; and every aspirer after universal monarchy, from Alexander down to Louis XIV. is a glorious murderer, an eminent robber, and a pestilence in the human shape.

Must then ambition have no object ? my hero will say : has Nature inspired in vain ? — No : if ever the perverseness of the enemy will force him to the field, then there is a laudable occasion for courage and intrepidity : the hero then is not a destroyer, but a defender of his country ;
he

he is not a murderer, but a subduer and punisher of murderers: the odium devolves on his adversary, and at his hands should the lives of the slain be required. But even under these circumstances he is not exempt from discretionary obligations of humanity. Blood ought not wantonly to be spilt, nor lives to be sported away for the victor's pleasure. The innocent hirelings of ambition should be reserved, as far as is consistent with safety, to grace the triumphal car of the conqueror, without taking that breath away which might afterwards proclaim his compassion.

If there be no enemy abroad to conquer, and his breast still burns with ardent thirst for glory, I will tell him a nobler conquest at home, a victory without bloodshed. Let him plume himself on the victory over his lawless and unreasonable affections, regard unjust ambition as his greatest foe, as the disturber of the common repose and his own felicity, and triumph over it. Such a conquest is real glory, and commands the applauses due to virtue: no remorse can follow it; no reflection of mind can embitter it. He has subdued an enemy within.

War is only lawful as far as it is the instrument of peace, as a moralist of Rome observes,* a city that too much delighted in its ravages. When undertaken with that view, so far from

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being

* *Bellum autem ita suscipiatur, ut nihil aliud nisi pax quæsitæ videatur.*

TULL. Off. I.

being a violation, it is a duty we owe our country, which has a right to expect protection from her members, and cannot find it but among the sons of her bosom. Every step, therefore, pursued to bring back peace that is fled, is a filial act, and the revenge that is taken on the aggressor is but the scourge of justice lifted up against the enemy that chased her away. It is sickly puritanism, unworthy a liberal mind, to think that one nation ought tamely to submit to the repeated insults and injuries of its neighbour, without endeavouring to redress the grievance, as that would be only removing the evil to a less proper situation, and making the innocent suffer for the guilty. Chastisement is required by the laws of policy. As well might we forbid the punishment of a criminal who has violated the laws, as withhold the execution of justice on an offending nation.

I would not be thought in the least to reflect on the profession of a soldier: they are the honourable and chosen bulwark of their country; and their courage (at all times an excellence, as well as a nursery for the bolder and hardier virtues) is with peculiar propriety exerted on occasion of the necessities of state. Risque of life is the dearest tribute a subject can pay.

Wars of ambition, denounced for no other cause than a thirst for rule, or at most for a punctilio of honour affronted only in imagination, are what alone merit our abhorrence,

as contrary to reason, to the general interests of society, and to humanity. As war comprizes in itself and consequences all the natural evils of life, he that is deliberately and without necessity the author of it is justly to be considered as the greatest moral offender. It is the duty of every power to combine against such a common disturber, by becoming guarantee of general peace. The monarch that thus espoused the cause of justice would be an ornament to his throne, and merit the diadem fortune has given him.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot forbear a national reflexion on our rival France ; a kingdom ever restless and troublesome to the repose of its neighbours ; which, instead of enriching its subjects by confining its attention to interior policy, to manufactures, and to agriculture, the gift of heaven and a happy climate, (which are the only real sources of wealth,) is taken up with the view of external acquisitions, purchased, if purchased at all, at the dear price of rivers of blood.

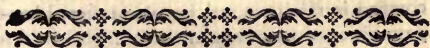
With France even the ratifications of the most solemn treaties of peace have served as preludes and preparations to some future more successful war : and when the successes of their arms have not kept pace with their eager wishes, (which has frequently proved their merited recompence,) the courts of foreign princes have been secretly embroiled by their intrigues.

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To the ambitious designs of this nation every state in Europe has, in its turn, been exposed. Even the generous inhabitants of a little island, who possess the smallest pittance the most penurious Agrarian Law would have bestowed on so deserving a people, cannot escape their avaricious and turbulent attempts to enslave them, and bow their necks to a yoke which nothing but a voluntary submission has a right to impose. A double portion of the liturgic curse is due to such notorious and wholesale *removers of a neighbour's landmark*; such infringers of the inherent rights of mankind, rights coæval with nature, the enjoyment of liberty and laws of their own enactment.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER VIII.

ON THEATRICAL HUMOUR.

Justitiæ partes sunt, non violare homines ; verecundiæ, non offendere : in quo maxime perspicitur vis decori. TULL. Off. I.

AFFECTATION of every kind is odious and insufferable ; and an ape is, as Locke observes, more disliked because he approaches the shape and look of what he is not ; namely, of a man. Mock-religion, respecting mere externals, and mock-friendship, as comprizing only the ceremonies of that noble principle, have already been censured, as the shadows and phantoms of what they would pass for ; and, as the temper of the age seems to call for it, it may not be amiss to hazard a few remarks on mock-delicacy, another ape in a form it has no pretensions to assume.

Left I should be misconstrued in my sentiments, I will premise it as my opinion of real delicacy, that it is an elegant refinement ; that it is even a branch of virtue, a *petite morale*, which does honour to the character of a man ; that it distinguishes him from a brute, and raises him above the level of human brutes, the gross
and

and senseless rabble, a set as far beneath the brute creation in merit, as they are above them in opportunities of improvement.

Delicacy is a principal ingredient in the composition of that being we stile a *gentleman*, which is, when well defined and well understood, the highest character in life; as in the real gentleman are included, the duties of virtue, the niceties of honour, and the ornaments of sentiment. A man may be honest, he may be just, he may be virtuous, and yet, with those valuable qualities, for want of delicacy, be regarded as of common mould. Great encomiums are unquestionably due to this principle, when genuine; and as great censure ought to be passed on the affectation of it; particularly when those are the pretenders to it who have the least imaginable share in it. It is just that impostures of all kinds should meet the rebuke and punishment due to fraud.

The affectation of delicacy I am about to introduce is of the theatric kind, a chronical distemper, which spreads during the season for plays, to the destruction of wit, humour, and pleasantry: and the persons that generally first catch the infection (*may every stone they tread on become a rose!*) are the innocent lambs in the upper galleries of the theatre, whose taste and manners cannot endure the least approaches to vulgarity, as foreign to their natures. To exhibit a scene, or to use an expression, that is
gross

gross or low, in their presence, is cruel indeed, as cruel as to utter unchaste expressions before a modest lady; which (according to the common cant) *no gentleman would be guilty of.*

It is a pity that our nation, in general, not content with adopting the agreeable customs and real improvements of its neighbours, should likewise transplant their blemishes with them. I do not here intend a glance at caprices in dress, which have afforded much subject for satire; for, with respect to that particular, I cannot entirely acquiesce in certain remarks those caprices have given birth to.* I now mean to attack

* Real beauty in dress is a point hard to be fixed. Beauty, in general, that beauty particularly which does not rest on mathematical proportion, must be chiefly resolved into fancy arising from custom. I have excepted mathematical proportion, as being of opinion that does really constitute beauty (I had almost said) even in the *divine mind*, and abstractedly from the prejudice of custom. Not a living soul would affirm that a trapezium is equally beautiful with a geometrical square, or a scalene with a right-angled triangle. To these we may join the abstract ideas of beauty and deformity, which we should not transfer to the doctrine of dress or millinery. It is idle to say that the ladies of this age wear head-dresses too large, or to quarrel with their hats, except indeed when their position hides beauties no art can rival. What is fashionable is beautiful, at least in some degree.

Custom

attack the reigning taste of aping the insipidity of the French, and exploding real humour from

Custom rules inconstantly in these matters ; else how is it possible even a Hottentot could annex the idea of *agreeable* to being smeared with fat and powdered with buchn ? how could the uncouth head-dress of a Henry IV. or the frightful coif of a Q. Anne Bullen, have been so admired, as to have been chosen for ornaments to the head of majesty ? The idea of dignity once annexed to a person, even the dress of that person will derive a value from the wearer. Nay, so strong is the chain of ideas, that beauty of person, as well as of dress, are often fancied by a spectator where, prejudice apart, they would not have been thought to exist. Mens judgments are influenced by merely material objects more than they are aware : whence the useful variety of choices. And though it be allowed that such is the construction of man, as that the race in general should be prepared for, or rendered susceptible of, certain opinions ; granting that there are some universal notions, (of colours, for instance,) in which men are agreed ; as that red, or blue, or green, are more pleasing than brown, or grey, or black ; yet ideas of beauty and dignity, of rank and ornament, are capriciously connected and separated by fashion and custom, and will not bear metaphysical precepts. — But a truce with the philosophy of dress : as this is not the professed business of the chapter in hand, we will make a halt, and intreat our reader's pardon for the digression.

from our English, stage : a circumstance of consequence to the cause of literature.

If we only represent *what men should be*, under the several refinements of taste and propriety, I cannot conceive the least pleasure, or use, resulting from plays ; (for the latter of these views is strenuously contended for by the advocates of the drama.) No folly, or vice, is exploded ; the end of comedy is defeated ; and true humour, which consists in exposing real character, is lost. It is true, we are to teach *what men should be* ; but it is also requisite that we represent *what men are* : by the one we paint patterns for imitation ; by the other, examples to be avoided.

As I have already observed, I will never be so blindly prejudiced in favour of the theatre as to consider it as much contributing to reform vice, however great an advocate I am for it ; but it may with truth be affirmed, that it is greatly instrumental in banishing follies and improprieties. By excluding striking characters, then, it follows, that we actually cut off the view of utility proposed by dramatic writers in one essential point at least. But if it must be granted, that vice is also corrected by a proper representation of it, there is an additional reason why high colouring for odious characters is indispensable. To satirize nothing is no satire ; to represent nothing is no representation.

That plays should not be overcharged with scenes of low-life and brutality, will be readily granted.

granted. *Too much of one thing* (says the old proverb) *is good for nothing.* Neither should an endless repetition of the most amiable characters be served up to the public. Variety is to be consulted, as a principal recommendation in all sorts of amusement. Let every species of character take its turn, and that variety will of course subsist. Pleasure and profit are both served by the help of variety: a sameness has no influential charm. More than this, I will even allow that the grosser characters should be judiciously and sparingly interspersed; but neither nature nor pleasure will countenance an utter exclusion of them.

If my opponents will warmly maintain the cause of sentimental plays in the extreme, let them confine their taste to certain restrictions, and assign proper and distinct provinces for sentiment and humour; make tragedy a vehicle for the former, and comedy for the latter. This distinction might be adopted with success, as the dignity of tragedy would dispense with sallies of pleasantry and humour, whilst comedy naturally calls for them. Such a conduct in writing would not be an exact picture of nature, which requires things to be drawn as they happen in life; yet, rather than a worse regulation should be admitted, this would be entitled to toleration.

But on no account should indelicacies in affairs of love be encouraged. Such examples

will

will never mend the manners of an age already too prone to dissoluteness. If ever the hiss is raised, filth like this demands it. But so great is the partiality of the people, that indecent jokes of this kind in the older dramatic writers meet with applause, or at least escape censure, when an innocently low character by a more modern writer, who has not acquired the sanction of time, is received with marks of dissatisfaction. Which unfair distribution of applause and censure may be laid to the account of the itch for finding fault, the prejudice in favour of established performances, and the inability of the greater half of an audience to judge for themselves.

That the lower ranks in life are ever the most forward in expressing a disapprobation of vulgar scenes is worthy of observation. They are sensible of their own failings, and regard the scenes before them as a satire on themselves: they view their own deformity in a glass, and are displeased at the appearance they make, and wreak their vengeance on the author that drew them. From their tribunal (which is the highest in the theatre) is issued the hiss of dissatisfaction, and that hiss is ecchoed back by such as cannot hazard an opinion of their own: an expression of disapprobation seems to imply discernment and taste: the first opinions are generally the strongest; and thus the dispute is finally determined.

To

To resume the thread of my argument : I am sensible there should be a difference made between a puppet-show at Bartholomew-Fair and a comedy at the Theatre-Royal. There should also be a difference between a comedy and a sermon. The excess of too much sentiment is as easily incurred as that of too little delicacy. When I called an expression of dislike to the humourous exhibition of a low character, *affectionation*, I had my reason for the expression, and fact in view. At these public places of entertainment it is a principal concern of the company in general to approve their good breeding and consequence ; and a more natural way of effecting their purpose does not seem to offer itself than that of exploding low-life. This, they think, insinuates that they themselves are persons of some rank and taste, and that their genteel education and conversation in polite life disqualify them for approving the scenes before them. Thus is the genius of our authors cramped by an obsequiousness to the people's humour.

Were the subject a little canvassed, I am of opinion it would appear that the higher ranks of people are less prone to testify an aversion to a scene of coarse breeding than those of ignoble birth. Perpetual scenes of high-life (perhaps sometimes awkwardly painted by a poet whose general residence has been confined to a third story) are too common and familiar to them to afford

afford them entertainment : they are sick of an eternal round of what they see every day at home, and require a diversity of representation to amuse them, and awaken an attention that has been palled by a surfeit. If this circumstance had been duly attended to by our affected gentry, they would not be so apt to shelter their consequence behind so thin a veil ; they would enjoy a variety they love at heart, and not tease themselves by a self-denial that gives them pain.

It ought to be considered, that there is a wide distinction between *viewing* a part, and *playing* it in our lives. That we do not approve of murder and villany is no reason why we may not see them represented and satirized on the stage. To exclude such scenes on account of their baseness is as absurd as to forbid the erection of St. Paul's cathedral because the people could not *eat* it when built. But as St. Paul's cathedral was not intended for food, but for the purposes of devotion and the ends of magnificence ; so the unamiable scenes of a dirty knave may be made subservient to the purposes of satire, though they cannot be proposed as patterns for imitation.

The last argument I shall advance in favour of sometimes permitting a low representation, is drawn from the supposed utility of the stage above-mentioned. It is the lower ranks in life, if any, that will be laughed out of their faults
and

and follies, as they do not think themselves above the poet's lash. Persons of quality, on the contrary, are generally seen to scorn his satire, and consider his censures with as much reverence as the barking of their lap-dogs. Like divinities in painting, they display themselves nakedly and without disguise, under sanction of their acknowledged superiority.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER IX.

WHETHER KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTES TO
HAPPINESS.

Ἔστιν ἢ ἴσα ἡδὺ μὴ λίσαν φρονεῖν.

EURIP. Iphig.

AS I have taken upon myself, as it were, the business of a casuist, among other disputed points, I have endeavoured to examine the merits of a question which has been often asked, Whether, and how far, knowledge contributes to happiness? a question in casuistry of real importance.

The substance of a foregoing chapter (chap.iii.) is employed in proving, that there is *nearly an equal portion of felicity distributed throughout the world*; and as the division of men into the two distinct classes of learned and ignorant may well be allowed, the conclusion drawn on that head might have nearly served as an answer to the present query, did not the merits of it seem to demand a particular discussion.

However knowledge may refine human nature, and elevate it above that of brutes, it betrays a want of experience and observation on the various characters of men, and the different
E conditions

conditions of life, not to know that the strongest pleasures of sense are heightened by the absence of knowledge and speculation, which tend to give a disrelish, at least in some degree, to every sensual enjoyment. The passions are the springs of numberless pleasures, and they are chilled by the intervention of mental acquisitions. True it is, a pursuit after knowledge is a feast to the mind, and worthy the attention of a rational being, as it, in the eye of reason, compensates for the loss of corporal delights : but it actually abridges us of other sources of pleasure, and casts a sickly veil over them.

That knowledge is not essential happiness, is a truth exemplified, in an eminent manner, in children, and in the beasts of the field ; from whom a strong inference may be drawn in support of this opinion. It will, without dispute, be readily acknowledged, that the lamb which skips and plays knows not sorrow ; and yet he is certainly but little indebted to knowledge for his felicity. Thoughtless and unconcerned, he seizes such pleasures as undeviating nature reaches forth to him, and is not excruciated with anxious doubts of the immortality of the soul, or the eternal existence of matter, the necessity of moral evil, or the freedom of the will.

That we increase in knowledge as we advance in years, we all know ; but we do not find that
we

we increase in happiness. On the contrary, experience tells us, that childhood, which is the most ignorant, is likewise the happiest, state of human life; a circumstance principally chargeable to their ignorance and simplicity. Evils multiply faster than blessings. Knowledge brings care as well as pleasure along with it; and he that eagerly embraces the one must be content to take his share of the other, which is often its troublesome companion. Pleasure and Pain, like two monarchs, divide the empire of the world between them, and conjointly sit on the same throne. Every one, whether learned Greek, or untaught barbarian, that is pleased to be a subject of the former, must at seasons endure the incontrollable influence of the latter. It is, however, allowed, that age alone impairs the faculties of enjoyment; for which some deduction must be made.

The Belles Lettres, to those whose taste inclines that way, afford a pleasure that leaves no disgust behind. But there are branches of science, which, however agreeable under certain attitudes of the mind, are beset with perplexity and gloom. The ingenious reader will readily conceive that I have an eye to deeply moral and metaphysical disquisitions, which are apt to alienate the affections from common pursuits. I have singled out that particular branch of knowledge which treats of the Deity, of the ultimate end of man's creation, and of other such

important points, as an acquaintance with these matters, so far as reason lends a beam, may be deemed noble, and as this part of science is particularly productive of dissatisfaction in affairs of life.

Fact and experience are doughty arguments in the scale of a dispute. It will reflect light on the question if we take a view of the characters of many studious men amongst us, and examine how far their appearance will countenance the above assertions. What gloom surrounds these consecrated votaries of the muses ! The gay, the sportive joys seem to have bid them eternal adieu : forbidding looks, silence, melancholy, retreats, usurp their place.

Great application so captivates the eager student, as to render that common conversation, which the less cultivated mind would be pleased with, sickly and palling. The meanness and weakness of many an observation, the tediousness and unimportant circumstances of many a tale, are considered by him as so many intrusions on his time and patience ; and with pain he listens to a discourse which exhibits neither instruction nor delight to him. Reasoning from causes he rises to effects. Penetrating into the temper of his companion, he has all his motives and weaknesses open to his view, and considers his reflexions as the mechanical effects of his several prejudices. He dies in the conversation of the living, and revives not till he re-enters

enters the society of the dead, entombed in his library.

Advancement in knowledge, and advancement in years, have, in fact, a resemblance of each other: they both engender dissatisfaction and peevishness, when they border on extremes; so that study without bounds is a premature age of the mind, like that of the body, not the center of pleasure. Truth may be sometimes disagreeable, but it is always sacred: we humble our hearts before the idol, even when we dislike its form.

Though knowledge may stand in the stead of sensual delights, there are times when that will pall on the mind, like corporal sweets on the body. Neither in sensual, nor in mental, gratifications must we expect a completion of happiness. Possibly a *tenor* of exquisite felicity may involve a contradiction, as every sensation exists by comparison, or at least is heightened by it. How far this circumstance is a necessary condition of nature, is a question beyond the reach of man. We see so much cause to thank the Creator for the blessings we inherit in things we understand, that we will conclude the evils of life, numerous as we find them, are the efflux of some general good, or the offspring of uncontrollable necessity. We cannot with reason arraign the goodness of a Being, who has, upon a balance, given us a greater share of good than evil.

The sun does not always shine and cheer the face of nature, but sometimes veils his face, to burst forth again with a more dazzling blaze. Day and night succeed each other alternate, and give pleasure repeated birth. Variety sparkles on the senses, and beguiles the tedious hours, which would otherwise hang like a load upon us.

The most probable way of enjoying pleasures in the highest perfection is to vary them as much as possible, and not to indulge in any to a surfeit. The pleasures of sense should be wisely blended with the recreations of the mind, and an agreeable variety, (as in music, the most delightful harmony,) would then succeed. We should fly from science to singing, from melancholy to music. In such a combination as this, sweetened with innocence and a serene consciousness of uprightness, except under peculiar circumstances of misery, or extraordinary gloom of mind, may arise such a share of felicity as will not make the possessor think existence a burden; and beyond these bounds of happiness neither the diving researches of the philosopher, the giddy flights of the libertine, nor the unruffled serenity of a peasant's life, will carry the most diligent enquirer.

There is a certain portion of happiness measured out to us all; and the only question is, in what pursuit it shall consist; a question which is determined by our choice or peculiar bias.

That

That choice is too generally imagined to be of great importance in the scale of happiness ; but time and familiarity level the difference that is at first supposed to exist between different choices. Happiness is situate in idea. If we fancy we have it, it is sufficient ; but too few there are who fancy so. It is seen by many at a distance, like the *ignis fatuus*, and vanishes at their approach, when they are ready to seize it.

Chance, or some trifling circumstance to universal taste trifling as chance, at first determines a man to a particular course in life, which by a private prejudice he judges most promising to happiness ; and if under such a choice, (whether it respects mental or sensual enjoyment) he can persuade himself that he is happy, no one else must dare dispute it. The wild lunatic himself, who is at so great a remove from rational knowledge, as, instead of possessing the common share allotted to others, to treasure up whims and nonsense diametrically opposite to reason, may yet be happy ; perhaps more so than the proud philosopher in Horace, who thinks himself *supremely wise, and king of kings*.*

E 4 It

- * Ad summam, sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum ;
Præcipuè sanus, nisi cùm pituita molesta est.

HORAT. lib. i. epist. i.

It affords a smile at many ancient, and some more modern, philosophers, to reflect on the great emphasis they laid on mental acquirement, as if that were exclusively the only business of life, as well as the only path that leads to bliss. They did not consider, that to appropriate so large a portion of time on speculation, as to leave none for action, is to defeat the intention of many faculties we derive from nature besides those of the mind. It would ill become an author to decry the dignity of knowledge; nor would I be interpreted so to do: but happiness is not always connected with dignity; and it is his office to warn against the dangerous effects of excess on human frailty, as tending to distort from the paths of propriety, without that harvest of exquisite felicity which the literary wanderer promises himself from his wild excursions into the regions of fancy.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER X.

ON THE PASSIONS.

—— *Affectus, quos Deus animis nostris indidit, ut sint tanquam stimuli ad honestas actiones.*

Vossius de Rhet.

THERE is not in the whole composition of man a more curious and noble contrivance displayed, than is visible in the construction and intention of the passions. The wisdom that is conspicuous in this part of his mechanism, and the inconceivable connexion of the soul and body, with the manner of their reciprocal action on each other, proclaim the hand that made him divine. The subject of these passions has been perhaps as much canvassed as any part of philosophy, and the application of them more perverted than any of the endowments of nature.

Ignorant of their use, the proud apathist, presuming to refine upon nature, judges a total extinction of them the business of life, and manufactures virtues out of a rock, valuable only for their toughness. Taking on himself the task of mending one of its greatest de-

signs, he tacitly pronounces himself wiser than its Author, like the giants of old, waging war with heaven : * and, as if the dreams of one alone were not sufficient, he erects the stoic school, and has his disciples.

Struck with the absurdity of apathism, the sensualist runs into the opposite error, and shunning the gulph of Charybdis, unwarily splits on the rock of Scylla. Extremes ever border on each other ; and one absurdity is seldom seen without a thousand in its train. The abolition of error oft resembles the amputation of Hydra's heads — Because the Stoic rejects the passions, the Epicurean preaches up the inordinate indulgence of them as the sovereign good, equally to the prejudice of his much abused converts, and equally in repugnance to the dictates of reason.

That the passions are intended for wise purposes, we may infer from their universality in the animal world. In some men they are weaker than in others, but no one is without them. Reason, and moderation the offspring of reason, are intrusted with the regulation of them ; and, as far as they perform their office, the passions are harmless, useful, and necessary. Without them

* *In hoc sumus sapientes, quod naturam, optimam ducem, tanquam deum, sequimur, eique paremus. ---- Quid enim est aliud, gigantum more bellare cum diis, nisi naturæ repugnare ?*

CICERO de sen.

them there would be a general stagnation, and by their impulse all the wheels of action are set in motion. To suppose them not intended for use in the animal œconomy is a doctrine as little consonant with reason as that of Lucretius, that the eyes were not made to see, or the ears to hear. They are the sources of pleasure, as well as the sources of action.

Authors deal much in simile, and similes are useful. The comparison of the passions to the gale that wafts the ship along, or to the horses that draw the chariot, is apt and striking, and the precept conveyed in it ever seasonable and new. The ship will not advance without a gentle gale to generate its motion, and a rude and ungovernable storm will overset it. The assistance of the skilful navigator is requisite, to regulate the sails and proportion them to the violence or gentleness of the wind. Man is a ship; his passions are his gale, and his reason is his pilot. Without his passions he will not move, and without his reason to command them, he will be lost in his career. — Again: The chariot is useless if bereft of the horses aid; and, without a charioteer, to direct and curb them, they would stray and be lost in their course. Man is a chariot: divest him of his passions, and his wheels are at rest: they are his horses, and he wants their labour. Take away his reason, and he loses his charioteer: reason is his charioteer, and his passions need its command.

— But let us review the principal affections, and separately speak of their qualifications and defects. As merit demands, we will begin with the noblest of them,

PITY for the miseries of others. But the immortal Shakespear lived before us, and has told us, in the genuine language of nature, that ‘ it descends, like rain, from heaven, ‘ upon the spot beneath. It is twice blessed : ‘ it blelsseth him that gives and him that takes.’ It is the most disinterested of all principles, and therefore the most commendable. The breast that is warmed by it partakes of divinity. The exercise of pity is the agency of the deity by man his substitute, to equalize and level the conditions of men, the sympathetic soul taking a share of anothers ills, as though it were a moiety of his burden.* The participation of evil by pity divides the pain, nor suffers an individual to be overborne. Pity is of more price than all the other virtues. One single tear shed on affliction is a liquid pearl of inestimable value ; and he, that cannot feel for another, is, by the justice of nature, a stranger to the pleasure that awaits relieving compassion. As cruelty is the apex of vice, pity is the summit of virtue ; and the soil where pity grows is a nursery for every virtue — If there be passions whose dictates are too much attended to, pity is not one of

* Τὸ Θεῷ δανίζει τις τὰ ἀγαθὰ προαιρέσει καὶ πράξει. SIMPLIC. C. 37.

of them : it needs less the discipline of reason than other affections. It is always meritorious, and seldom offends.

It were treason against the majesty of Venus not to range the passion of LOVE next in order. This is an amiable passion, as it is a composition of benevolence and friendship, seasoned with a sensation very *affettuoso*, which its votaries alone can feel. The breast that is incapable of it is not a bed for the virtues : they require a generous warmth to produce them. Love (genuine and successful love), is perhaps the source whence flows the greatest delight human nature is susceptible of : it is the feast of the mind as well as of the senses. All other enjoyments are insignificant and trifling when set in competition with the sweets of love. The Author of nature has wisely ordered that the increase of the human race (that second creation) should arise from the most enchanting passion he has implanted in man. But as the fairest flowers that blow, as the finest works of art, are most exposed to the injury of a spoiler, love, which is capable of producing the most genuine joy, is often the parent of as insupportable pain. The effects of it are warily to be shunned where a prospect of success is cruelly denied. If reason assents, snatch the golden opportunity : if reason says, Forbear ; fly the insidious siren, ere it be too late. Retreat on the first alarm. When love has seized its possession, it will not be dispossessed ;

possessed ; and, like an imperious tyrant, it knows not controul. It is a passion wild and tumultuous as the sea, and will not lend an ear to reason, whose voice is gentle, and heard only in a calm.

FEAR is indeed of ignoble birth ; but it is more necessary to the animal œconomy than the most generous affections. Fear is the alarm-drum that apprizes us of danger, and bids us retreat in time. Fear in moderation is a friendly guard. By the warning it gives, it not only guards ourselves from harm, but may even suggest a kind concern for the welfare of another : in either view we are indebted to its influence. But immoderate fear is a cruel tyrant, and it is misery in the extreme to be a slave to it. When it unreasonably and continually alarms, it is a disease of the mind, and realizes evils that are only ideal. If the pain of apprehension be equal to the harm we dread, it differs not which we embrace : the suffering is, in degree, the same. But a severer charge than this has been brought against unbounded fear, as frequently the origin of crimes. Instances are recorded where it has inspired with cruelty and rancour. As such the emperor Tiberius is represented, whose cowardly apprehensions would incite him to the meanest and most unprincely acts of cruelty. To his imaginary dangers he would readily have sacrificed the lives of all his subjects.

REVENGE

REVENGE is a passion that deserves to be well understood, and the subject of caution. Anger, like fire, is dreadful when it predominates, and tolerable only when under command. The cause that gives birth to revenge is injury, or a supposition of injury. A real injury received, the spirit of revenge will say, is a just cause for a requital, and the very laws imply the same, which are only a public revenge for injury, judicial punishment being a law of society, and private requital a law of nature; and it must be granted that it is not an unreasonable, but a natural passion. It needs, however, the rein rather than the spur. But in this contest we will call in reason for our counsel. Let it be observed, that though the injured person has a right to demand satisfaction, he may yet remit his claim as a debt, and absolve the offender; and the remission, which in an ordinary instance is no breach of duty, may rise into an act of generosity, and become a virtue. That it is in most cases better to drop our resentment, may be concluded from these considerations: The affront offered may be undesigned; it may arise from an error or weakness; or the offender may have been sufficiently punished for it in his own mind on a cool reflexion.* On any

* ————— Cur tamen hos tu
Evasisse putes, quos, diri conscia facti,
Mens habet attonitos, et surdo verberare cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?

of which suppositions the stifling of resentment is a noble sacrifice offered at the shrine of Virtue. It was delicately said, that *the injurious are more the objects of pity than those who suffer their wrongs** — A sentiment sometimes literally true, and always worthy an elevated mind, which can, in compassion to human frailty, overlook the insolence of injury. He that has such a share of meekness in his complexion, as to act in conformity with this sentiment, will at least have a pleasing satisfaction in a retrospect view of his own generosity, and escape that remorse, which, as the scourge of a fiend, chastises the vindictive mind. To avoid the charge of rank Stoicism, I will notwithstanding make some little concession to the contrary opinion. If revenge is sometimes proper, it is when the injurious foe triumphs in or repeats his wrongs. It is then a salutary correction, which may awaken him to a sense of his injustice, as well as secure the sufferer from future attack : and in some such cases it is an omission of pernicious tendency, as well as a mark of meanness, to swallow resentment.

ENVY is the bastard sister of EMULATION, whose place it frequently usurps, and the passion of a little mind. To dislike real excellence is injustice and folly ; falsely imagined excellence calls for pity. Genuine envy is a compound of malevolence and meanness, and therefore the object of scorn. The envious are ill-natured,

* Ο ἀδίκων τῷ ἀδικημένῳ κακοδαίμονες εἰσι.

DEMOCRAT. sentent.

natured, or the prosperity of another would not give them pain. They are mean in spirit, as their envy is a tacit confession of superiority in their rivals.* As Nature has allowed us the use of reason, in combination with the passions, we will not so far dishonour her as to suppose her the champion of this base principle in all its littleness. Mere envy depresses and wastes its subject: emulation distends the breast and exalts its votaries. It follows, then, that envy should be banished from the heart, as the impostor that would represent emulation, that laudable spring of generous actions. Be it, nevertheless, observed, as a consequence of human weakness, that an inordinate desire of excelling may become, in a small degree, criminal, without any admixture of pining envy. Those who are too fond of themselves are found guilty of injustice to others. It is a received opinion concerning misers, that they are scarcely honest. If we apply this remark, more extensively, to those who are selfish in other respects, the inference is equally proper. So that a desire of excelling, however commendable in itself, may overleap due bounds as well as the other passions. In promoting our own cause, we ought to render justice to that of others. Were this always the case, the world would be happier than it is, as the rage for excellence is to many a principal cause of discontent.

GRIEF

• Qui invidet minor est. PLIN. epist.

GRIEF is a very tender affection of the soul, and bears about it a dignity that inspires with awe. Misery is sacred. It is considered as the business of a philosopher to account for every thing, whether he is able or not, and it is the humour of many to do so. In compliance with this reigning taste we will observe, that this passion seems intended for the same office to the mind which pain performs for the body, and that they both subserve a purpose, however unpleasantly. Were it not for pain, we should be too careless of providing against injuries subversive of our welfare and existence. The rankling of a wound is a powerful call to apply its cure: the pangs of grief are the spurs and warnings of the mind to avoid those evils that give it birth——But whether this sensation be deemed serviceable, or not, to the human œconomy, it is derived by a natural consequence from the benevolent affections of love and friendship, and is their mournful orphan. Where exists a sensibility of pleasure, by the influence of stubborn necessity, must likewise exist a sensibility of pain. Grief is the privation of joy, embittered by a comparison, made in the mind, of a present unhappy situation with a former agreeable state, and inseparably attends the loss of what engaged the affections. We cannot be too diligent in dispelling its gloom, as immoderate sorrow is dangerous, as well as fruitless, in its consequences.

There

There are other subordinate and collateral branches of passion, which are some of them reducible to, and dependent on, the above leading and primary affections; but we will content ourselves with surveying these in this cursory manner, as sufficiently answering the purpose in view, of slightly repeating the beauties of this curious machinery, and hinting that, though they are all of them intended for the private purposes of pleasure or necessity, at certain times, they are yet to join in the chorus of a concert conducted by benevolence, according to the beautiful idea of the elegant Mason.*

But alas! in spite of all this fine reasoning, notwithstanding this airy and plausible scheme, men will proceed in their chosen track, and Mr. Preceptor preaches almost in vain; such is the influence of the dæmon Arimanius; but though their natural tempers predominate in

mens

• Humanity, thy awful strain
 Shall ever meet our ear,
 Sonorous, sweet, and clear.
 And as amid the sprightly-swelling train
 Of dulcet notes that breathe
 From flute or lyre, the deep bass rolls its
 manly melody,
 Guiding the tuneful choir;
 So thou, Humanity, shalt lead along
 Th'accordant passions in their moral song,
 And give our mental concert truest harmony.

Ælfrida.

mens actions, that is no reason for suspending the office of a moralist. It is the part of a good reasoner to change the reigning humour by his reasonings, and convert it to the purposes of virtue and propriety. Studious men are different in their manners from others, and it is reading and reflection that occasion this metamorphosis, though it be not always for the better.

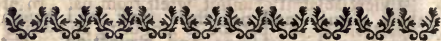
I may possibly be thought, by regular and cautious men, to insist too much on the utility of the passions ; but they are recommended in combination with reflection. Be it remembered, that reason, the great boast of man, is sordidly selfish when the breast is untinged with generosity ; and generosity is seated in the nobler passions ; the proper conduct of which constitutes the basis of morality.

In fact, if we would pursue the subject closely and urge it quite home, since self-love has so unlimited a share in human actions, it is the peculiar province of kings and governors (and even of the subject, as far as it lies within his sphere) to seek out and reward merit, wherever it is to be found, and to foster the seeds of virtue. If men in general always have acted, and always will act, from motives of interest, Prudence would take them by this foible and avail herself of it, by making their interest and their duty the same. The upright man should be the friend of the prince, because he is the friend of mankind. He should shower
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his favours on a fruitful soil, and not waste them on the sand or on a river; court men for their virtue, and not their rank, and banish vice from his presence and protection. His kingdom would then reap the harvest of his munificence, and revere his nod. Virtue as inseparably follows its reward as heat the fire.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XI.

ON PATRIOTISM.

—— *Perche de la libertà solamente il nome da i ministri de la licenza, che sono i popolani, et da quelli de la servitù, che sono i nobili, è celebrato, desiderando qualunque di costoro non essere ne à le leggi, ne à gli huomini, sottoposto. MACHIAV.*

POLITICS and patriotism are subjects so much in fashion at present, that not to have given some little attention, in a miscellaneous work, to the general buzzing about them, may be brought as an argument of stupidity. It is scarce worth while to reason about the former, as it is manufactured at the house of every publican: but patriotism being a moral theme, we will obtrude a few remarks on that extraordinary principle.

For the sake of regularity, we will begin by observing, that as every action, and every gesture, of a man has its cause, we should first endeavour to find out the motive of the principle in agitation, and from thence stamp an estimate on it. The great motive, the soul, of patriotism, when most sincere and sterling, is enthusiasm,

flaſm, and an ardent thirſt for glory.* That is a view adverſity cannot wreſt from us. In proportion as the patriot is ſanguine and warm in his complexion, his endeavours are hearty and genuine : and, as I have more than once taken notice, that the warmer affections of the ſoul are cooled by the influence of knowledge, by conſequence, as the world has gradually refined upon nature, (though every innovation does not deſerve the name of *refinement*,) patriotiſm, among other eager principles, has gradually declined in its influence. An indifference is frequently the conſequence of extenſive reflexion, and the bane of effort and action. Self-love, with a foundation leſs meritorious than a deſire of being renowned, has ſo far ſupplanted it, as ſcarce to permit us to conſider any man as a patriot, till we have proved him, like gold, in the hotteſt furnace of ſuffering adverſity.

A rigid patriot is one, who will loſe a real life, to gain an imaginary one. Glory is his god. In purſuit of that, he will reſign up the choiceſt bleſſings in the eſtimation of common ſouls, and ſee, in conſcious integrity and honour, all the happineſs earth can promiſe. He will regard his country as his neareſt relation, and renounce all other conſanguinity when put in competition with it.

Patriotiſm,

* Denique non parvas animo dat gloria vires ;

Et ſæcunda facit peſtora laudis amor.

Triftia, v. 12.

Patriotism, under all these disadvantages, has no great allurements to a worldly mind. It is at best but a lottery, and such an one as very few amongst us will venture to stake their fortunes in. Whoever embarks in such undertakings, though conscious of his own integrity and resolution, has a fickle judge of his character in the body of the nation; some of whom, influenced by private considerations of interest or personal dislike, and others through blindness and ignorance, will not always reward and punish according to the directions of virtue and justice. When such beings as patriots are really found, they are to be esteemed the choicest gifts of heaven, and cherished with unusual care.

In cases and questions of this sort, if we would search out a complete character, experience of the individual in question will alone inform us; and experience must be the result of time, which is the only touchstone of perseverance, that primary ingredient of patriotism. Circumstanced as we are, we must content ourselves with the conviction of *fools*, who, as the Roman historian observes, are taught only by the event,* when no other information can be had, how much soever the pride of our judgments will suffer thereby; and we must believe no more, and no longer, than we read proofs of

• ——— Eventus; stultorum iste magister est.

LIV. Dec. iii. l. 2.

of professions in the actions of our patriot. By the same principles of reasoning, if the people are wise, the professing friend of his country must patiently wait a while, before he can receive his laurels, to crown his endeavours after its good, from a full confidence in his integrity.

That many of the ancients, and some moderns, have earned applause for patriotic virtue, must not, nor can with justice, be denied. Through love of fame men have been known to slight the frowns of adversity, under the several distresses of want, hunger, pain, and death itself. If terrors like these could not scare them from their purposes, terrors at which we are prone to revolt, it were great injustice and cruelty to deny them that poor reward of their firmness which they have so dearly bought, our warmest acknowledgements.

Neither ought we to object to the motive of such noble actions as have signalized some of them in the behalf of their country. It is invidious to allege, that a desire of fame is a selfish consideration, since self-love is the *primum mobile* of all human actions, and it cannot be expected that any one but a lunatic will act for no apparent reason, or that a hero can entirely divest himself of the character of man. Love of glory is harmless, laudable, and useful, and springs from emulation, a nursery of virtue. It is to be highly caressed when it co-operates

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with the general good, and serves the public. The common notions of honour, the care an upright man takes to approve his conduct in life, are built on this principle; and even the bare endeavour to avoid reproach terminates in it. We must not, therefore, be too fond of dabbling in the doctrine of motives, to the prejudice of those we judge. With us, fallible and short-sighted mortals, past actions alone must ascertain our characters, when views cannot be discovered, and as they are more or less favourable, we must more or less esteem the agent. But to deny us our motive entirely, is to launch a ship in a dead calm, and expect it will reach a port.

Who then is a patriot, a sincere and honourable one, who from his heart disdains to accept of praises he has not dearly bought? — I could name such a man even in our times, and a little island would furnish us the example: a commander, who does not, as Cæsar did, trample on the liberty of his country, but bravely defends it against a foreign invader: a hero that refused a crown, to wear the laurel, an ensign of greatness in his opinion surpassing the regal diadem. Such a man as this does indeed deserve favour and support from his countrymen, for whom he is ready to encounter every danger, and to give up his life, that he may live again in future ages. Virtue like his is more than we have reason to expect from a son of nature,
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in body equally as sensible of injuries of every kind as the tenderest of us, though endued with a spirit superior to them all. Toils of war, hazard of losing all our support, and risque of life, are bitter pills for mortals to swallow.

On the other hand, pretended patriotism, patriotism which runs no hazard of any kind, and veers about with every wind, as sordid interest and pecuniary views incline, is a despicable meanness, and merits only the contempt and scorn of the world. That man must possess an ungenerous and a little soul, who arrogates to himself a glory which he is conscious he merits not, and for which he is not ready to lay down an adequate purchase. He is to be considered as basely taking an advantage of the ignorance or inattention of those who credit his plausible professions, and as very a cheat as the thief that robs us of our money, when our absence, or unwariness of his design, affords him the opportunity.

I shall, without question, by some be understood to glance at a celebrated Englishman in the character last described; but I candidly own no such personality is here intended, as I chuse not to give my opinion what caricature will resemble him. Ethics are of no party. It would ill beseem a moral writer to enlist on any side. I only offer a few remarks, to be applied at the reader's discretion.

If he is judged to have rendered service to his country, (as many of its friends affirm,) it is political, as well as moral, justice, that he should reap the fruits of his labours for the time already past. Whether a man be sincere, or not, it is policy to reward those actions that are beneficial to the nation, by way of bribe and earnest for future services. If it were made worth mens while to be honest, they would be so. We stand on an excellent bottom where virtue and gain cement each other.

It is not so necessary to the politician, as is generally supposed, to enquire whether a man acts from public principles of honour, or from private views, provided he act at all: whatsoever the motive be, the benefit, or injury, (facts, without my suffrage, shall determine which) derived to his country, is just the same.

To confound private with public characters is beside the purpose: they need not be set in contrast when they concern not each other. If we make both concessions, that those men our patriot has so roughly handled, are the base tools he has represented them to be; and that he himself is as totally devoid of principle; yet even on these suppositions, if he be really at enmity with them from private resentment, the public may possibly be availed of his endeavours, as one knave is an excellent instrument to ex-
pose

pose the baseness of another : it were almost too coarse to add, *that when rogues fall out, honest men come by their right.*

Allowing he is really interested at heart in repressing the encroachments of arbitrary power, (same says he is,) he is embarked in a worthy cause. I wish I could say as much in favour of the mob, who compose his body-guard. I fear they are to be esteemed greater sticklers for it, when they compel the inhabitants of a city to illuminate their windows, whether they will or not, (*once because their patriot was sent to prison,*) than the most despotic minister.

I am much of the opinion of my author, [Machiavel,] that, in general, only the *name* of liberty is contended for by the heads and the dregs of a people. Few ages afford examples of integrity in administration. Interest has too large a gripe. The general good is swallowed up in the views of individuals. If the present be bad, it is no novelty. A perpetual round of the same causes cannot fail of producing the same effects. Men of dishonest principles are often fixed on for the stewards of a nation, and not sufficiently accountable to those who appoint them. The temptations they lie exposed to are great, and their virtue to resist them is none at all. The people fix the price of their liberties, and then repine if the minister lays down the purchase. Hence the tears they shed.

But, to take leave of our patriot : If after all his professions of patriotism, and protestations of integrity, (like some that have gone before him,) he meanly deserts his cause, thro' disappointments of sordid expectation, or unworthy allurements, he must not hope to be numbered with former worthies, those moral comets, who stem'd the torrent of corruption and opposition to the last, and would suffer an injury from so undeserving an interloper.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XII.

ON THE PUBLIC EXERCISE OF PROSTITUTION.

————— *Quis enim non vicus abundat*
Tristibus obscænis? ————— Juv. sat. ii.

IN an age so strenuously inclined to improvements as the present, there is encouragement for throwing out hints and proposals that might tend to the emolument of society. With an eye to this purpose, and urged by the favourable reception well-meant endeavours ever meet with, I have turned my thoughts on the subject of a pernicious evil, which has too long infested our streets, to the detriment of health, life, and morality, with a view to remove it. The evil I mean (to make my preface short) is the open and public exercise of prostitution, an exercise productive of both a moral and a physical contagion, the one on the manners, and the other on the bodies of the people.

It will hardly be contended, that there is a possibility of stopping the spreading contagion by a radical cure, the prevention of fornication, which is the cause of it. The passion for sen-

usual indulgence in this respect has been ever too rebellious to submit to the controul of law. The legislators of every age and nation, from the remotest periods of antiquity, have despaired of subduing it entirely; and the best course many of them could take, before disease existed, was to license it under certain regulations, which were judged to introduce as few ill consequences as a toleration of any kind would admit.

Were it in the power of legislature totally to put a stop to fornication, I grant it would be such a benefit to a nation, as would amply repay the trouble attending the exertion of law against offenders. Matrimony, the source of population, which is a great concern of state, suffers exceedingly from its prevalence among youth; who would engage in chaster connexions, and become friends to their country, if they could be deprived of the company of women on any other conditions. Some there are who give it as their opinion, that a stricter search after prostitutes, and a severer penalty inflicted on each party concerned, would prevent it: but, I believe, with little ground for their assertions. The best consequences that would follow a prohibition of this kind, would be only a removal of the evil out of sight, by forcing the delinquents to retreats, and perhaps a greater eagerness after a pleasure they would esteem the sweeter because it was forbidden

den them.* Besides that a strong check on the ungovernable luxuriancy of mankind might beget a moral distortion.

Taking it for granted (as I think we may) that an entire reformation in this particular is too great a blessing to be hoped for from human perverseness and frailty, the present train of ills merits the attention and redress of administration. To give a higher idea of the necessity of such a redress, we will cursorily survey the chief grounds of complaint.

The first grievance we will touch on is, the additional temptation men are exposed to from the public appearance of prostitutes in the streets and other places of resort, and the lures they openly spread for the unwary. A sight of such objects awakens a desire, which inattention, or other amusement, has laid asleep, and many are caught, who otherwise would have escaped. *Opportunity makes him a thief*, who without it had been honest. Scarce half the number of rakes, who now are their dupes, would be at the pains of searching for them. They see them at their elbow, are seized by surprise, and surrender at discretion.

A disease, which saps the foundation of health and life, is dispersed over the nation, whose very cure is the bane of strength. Young men, who are the ornament of the present, and

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should

- * Quicquid servatur cupimus magis, ipsaque furem.
Cura vocat. — Ov. amor. l. iii. el. 4.

should constitute the support of the succeeding, age, are the victims of its ravages, and not rarely pay the forfeit of their lives, as the dear purchase of their gratification. Nor does the evil rest with them. The relics of disease and weakness are the inheritance of their children, instead of the wealth they have wasted; and the innocent suffer with the guilty, who deserve not to share in their ills, when as yet they have not partaken in their vices. It is true, posterity has never consulted the good of its ancestry: yet we, if we are just, shall avoid entailing our own miseries on those who come after us, whether they have deserved our favours or not, and not with surly wit demand, *What good has posterity ever done us? — Let posterity consult for itself.*

The hiding-places of common prostitutes are not confined to the purposes of forbidden love. They are nurseries for every moral disease that can infect a nation. Debauchery is not the only vice they harbour: on the contrary, it is perhaps one of the most harmless and inconsiderable. Crimes of blacker die there find an asylum. By public relations we are informed, that men are robbed, and murdered, by the abandoned retainers of those odious retreats; and, by the losses they sustain from their commerce among them, are tempted to replace their money by means which at last cover them with shame and ignominy. Idleness is a constant

stant attendant at these detested cells ; and it is an observation not less true than trite, that those who are not well, are generally ill, employed. Vile as the characters of prostitutes are, they are rendered worse by the licentious state of their prostitution.

Another loss to the community from the present mode, is that of labour. There are computed to be many thousand idle professors of prostitution in the metropolis only, who are lost to the state, by not contributing their share of industry to supply the several national wants. Such a number of persons properly employed would be no inconsiderable accession to any useful occupation they are capable of undertaking ; and even a revenue might arise to the government, by way of tax on luxury, from the profits of their labour, and the hires of their prostitution.

To enumerate all the evils that are consequent on the present open and unregulated exercise of fornication, would be both unnecessary and improper : unnecessary, because they are sufficiently known to the generality of the world : and improper, as it would be to collect in a body a multitude of such descriptions as would be an affront to decorum. It is enough that we are witnesses of what is complained of nightly in the streets, without painting the scenes afresh, and staining the leaves of a book with recapitulations of what mischiefs are en-

generated from the spawn of obscenity. If the above are not subjects for complaint, what are all the natural evils of life, and at what shall we be concerned? Custom familiarizes these things, it is true; and by means of it we overlook them: and so it will pestilence and the sword: they can only infect and destroy; and if that be a trifle, why complain of any thing?

Such being the inconveniences resulting from unlicensed prostitution, it will, I trust, be allowed there is great room for reforming it. The most natural method of effecting which purpose appears to be by the erection of public stews, subject to the inspection and regulations of officers appointed by government; whose province should be to prevent the incidental grievance accruing, which are above pointed out. The desirable example has been set, (tho' not entirely on this plan,) by several states, as Sparta, Rome, Leghorn, and others, by way of excluding greater evils.*

Indeed

* The Grecian states licensed courtezans, (who were to wear a peculiar garment,) as a remedy against adultery. As matrimony is an institution of society founded on general utility, adultery and fornication come within the description of vices; and though fornication be the more simple and innocent of those two irregularities, it is yet to be deemed immoral; that commerce, in particular, with

Indeed we need not have travelled so far for examples : we read of public stews, on the Bank-Side, Southwark, which were licensed by the bishop of Winchester, and subject to regulations confirmed by parliament in the reign of Henry II. the articles of which are to be seen in *Stowe's Survey*. Four of the most remarkable orders are the following.

That no stew-holder should keep any woman that HAD THE PERILOUS INFIRMITY OF BURNING.

That no single woman, desirous of forsaking her sins, should be *kept against her will*.

That
with common women, which does not subserve the cause of procreation. That our age is not more corrupt than some former ages, in this respect, may be concluded from the following words, which are to be found in Cicero's oration for M. Coelius, and would scarce be uttered now by a rake in sad sobriety, much less from a *rostrum*, except by an orator Henley, or a swine that had the gift of speech. They are these. *Verum si quis est qui etiam meretriciis amoribus interdictum juventuti putet, est ille quidem valde severus, negare non possum : sed abberret non modo ab hujus seculi licentia, verum etiam a majorum consuetudine atque concessis : quando enim hoc non factum est ? quando reprehensum ? &c.*

Were I to interpret the licence here granted into an encouragement of wantonness, I should censure it as very bad politics ; but if it was intended by way of anticipation against worse, I could even adore it.

That no stew-holder should receive a *nun*, or a *man's wife*.

That no man should be *inticed* into any of these houses; nor any single woman take money for lying with a man, unless he lay all night. —

They were abolished in the year 1546, by command of Henry VIII. that pattern of chastity and conscientious advocate for wedded love!

I do not here intend (nor is it my province) to specify the manner and particulars of the erection I recommend: that I leave for a more able projector; and content myself with barely representing the want of it. It is, however, proper to take notice, that wherever such an institution receives the sanction of law, the utmost care should be taken to root out seminaries of unlicensed courtezans, as a neglect of them would greatly impede the best endeavours to remove the grievance. Some vigilance must, in such a case, be adopted, and JUSTICE, now too *blind*, open her eyes, and seek out in earnest those who transgress, if any met encouragement. The modest fair might then pass along the streets without having her ears assailed with ribaldry and filth, and escape the confusion that now often tinges her cheek with a blush: and the unwary boy, who before thought no ill, avoid the snare the syren spreads for him, and not be inticed to squander away money, sometimes not his own.

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If it be objected, that the same difficulty of eradicating irregulars would afterward subsist as we now encounter, I take the liberty to deny it. Disease scares a little, though not so much as were to be wished. Many of those who are strongly bent on satisfying their desires, would be at small pains to avoid the scourge, if they had it in their power, and of two evils embrace the least. It would naturally follow from thence, that the exercise disallowed would fall to decay, and the professors of it diminish in number of course, without the assistance even of additional vigilance. At present no such choice exists. Men must embrace both debauchery and disease, instead of only the former; by which the consequences of their conduct are not confined to themselves.

As the trouble attending a completion of the libertine's wish would be equally considerable, (and only the propagation of disease be taken away,) under such an institution, the cause of matrimony would not suffer. Matrimony was as much encouraged by the practice of the Greeks and Romans, when disease existed not, as now: and if that produces not, this destroys the race. By far the greater part of our youth (probably six out of ten, at the least) indulge in illicit amours, under all the present disadvantages attending their libertinism. I believe I have hardly exceeded the truth in my random calculation. If not, what a number of the human race must derive a weakness, the concomitant

tant of disease, to the detriment of their species ! and how few are deterred by an apprehension of the evils their profligacy entails on them ! — They proceed in their career till they are weary of it, and then, by experience taught, have final recourse to the arms of a lawful bride for that genuine satisfaction, and that feeling return of affection, they could not find in the venal embraces of a harlot.

To back all these endeavours, it would be no mean assistance if the means of support for the unportioned fair could be multiplied, to engage the attention of superfluous numbers. A prohibition of some employments for men, in favour of them, would surely be no hardship for the one, and might prove a relief to the other. The circle the latter move in is too contracted, and from the difficulties they have to struggle with they are led to embrace their shame. The natural evils of life incidental to the human race fall more to the share of that tender sex than to the other. The laws of society should in pity favour them as much as possible.

As to the unhappy prostitutes themselves, it will naturally be observed, that they have been already viewed with the eye of pity, and afforded a comfortable retreat from their miserable situation.* Much to the honour of those who projected the erection, and contribute to

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* The Magdalene-house.

the support of such an asylum, it must be allowed there is a retreat. But that does not come home to the point, nor is it sufficient for the general good. If the unbridled passions of youth are too impetuous to bear the curb, there must necessarily exist some object of their desire, which should rather be whores than the wives of others; and if the infatuation of some hapless females, who are insensible to the miseries they court, or their inability from disease or other causes, incapacitates them from availing themselves of this public indulgence, we may as well correct what appears not to admit of a cure, by abridging the train of consequences, and (if that were feasible) endeavouring to advance the ends of procreation.

The women in question (I am aware) are seen in a light so odious by the stern part of the world, and particularly those of their own sex, that to plead for what might only seem a relief to them will be thought a crime: *Build not a house to hide their devoted heads, they will say; chastise them rather daily with scorpions.* But if, unlike robbers, they are necessary evils, and subserve a cause, by pruning the dangerous luxuriancy of mankind; if some must be tolerated; humanity has other dictates in store:

*Chrysippus non dicet idem, nec mite Thaletis
Ingenium, dulcique senex vicinus Hymetto.*

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The miserable in every station are subjects that ask our pity, not our hatred ; and they are sufficiently miserable, both in situation and prospect. They are enemies to themselves more than to others. Despised and scorned by virtuous pride, hated and detested by rigid severity, they wander about unpitied. The hospitable door which is open to virtuous poverty when covered with rags, is shut to them alone ; and a prison is the common asylum their country affords them. Occupations which belong only to females, the effeminate manufacture and vending of their own ornaments and clothing, are usurped by the other sex, to their prejudice ; and even opportunities of servitude under an imperious mistress are not always to be found. To loss of character (which perhaps was the forfeit of an unguarded moment) is added the loss of every friend, and they are constrained to submit to all the indignities and insults which the brutality of the lowest order in life is pleased to bestow on them. They have punishment enough for their faults, both mental and corporal, if punishment in any shape would awake them to sensibility. The very horror an imprudent female is beheld with is the parent of despair to her, and the bane of her amendment. Pity be shed on the offender, when denied to the offence : the weakness, not the vice, bespeaks it.

I fear,

I fear, were my project to come under public consideration, it would have much to combat with the prejudices of some who are contracted in their notions, and the interests of others, who with the worm subsist on destruction. Religion would be brought into a dispute, wherein it has no concern, tho' it never, that I knew, forbade a small evil when it excluded a greater, and always enjoins real goodness in preference to ostentation. That it would *seem* an encouragement of vice to erect a theatre, whereto to exhibit its scenes, is a plea which is only plausible, and reflects no honour on the understanding of him that makes it. We are not to be condemned, or to condemn, by appearances: the intention and consequences must stamp an estimate on the merit of a deed. If indeed a public countenance of regulated fornication will be attended with insurmountable obstacles, or found not to accomplish the purpose of institution, no more can be urged in its behalf; but to object to it for reasons of superstition is weak indeed, and a disgrace to so sensible and enlightened an age as this.

The alarm that is raised by a bold innovation in time subsides; particularly if experience pronounces it salutary. Custom has reconciled people to a Magdalene-House and a Foundling-Hospital, though they gave so great offence at first. It has reconciled them even to an hospital for the cure of a disease the consequence and

and scourge of vice. The same familiarity would favour the scheme in question. What more dismal, yet what more necessary, than the remedy for one under the influence of the hydrophobia? Death is his only release: cruelty to him, if a cruelty; but mercy to numberless others, who without it might have been the devoted objects of his contagion.

Pope, speaking of governments, has said, 'What's best administer'd is best.' — If the foreign institutions, brought for examples, are not blest with desired success, it may reasonably be attributed to want of care in conducting them, and not to a defect in the scheme itself. However, as I am not inclined to be systematical, if the utmost care will not subdue the Hydra, I am ready to give up the argument: I know there are more projectors than can be attended to, and more projects than are good. — Now throw we a veil over the subject, and think of it no more.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XIII.

ANCIENT AND MODERN VIRTUES COMPARED.

*Fallit enim vitium specie virtutis et umbra,
Cum sit triste habitu, vultuque et veste severum.*

JUVEN. sat. xiv.

IT has been an almost universally received notion for some thousand years, that the world increases in vice in proportion as it increases in age. This opinion is visible among the Romans in their very language, which has an idiom implying the degeneracy. *Vir antiquus*, a man of antiquity, is used by them to signify a man of probity. Whether this sentiment be well grounded, will appear from an examination of the modern with ancient characters of men who still live in the historian's page. If it be just, it is enough to fright a man of common fortitude, as we must in a course of years degenerate into very devils. But we hope to prove, by way of consolation, that there is only a fluctuation of virtues and vices; and that one virtue and one vice expels and succeeds another,

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This inquiry has a near connexion with the question, How far knowledge contributes to happiness? and is partly reducible to it. A cursory glance on the ancients manners, in order to compare them with our own, will reflect a light on both these queries.

We cannot better direct our remarks, than to the actions of the greatest and most absolute men of former times, such as, by their stations in life, were enabled to follow the full bent of their inclinations. If we do this, how much will the ancients suffer from a nice inspection into the lives and morals of many of their kings and emperors! Had the monarchs of old Rome (the greatest city and seat of empire of antiquity) combined to disgrace the age they lived in, they could not well have more completely accomplished their purpose than they have done. The histories of most of them contain such extravagant examples of tyranny, cruelty, lawless lust, injustice, and every vice that has deserved a name, as would hardly be credited by one not versed in the annals of that country. Subjects slaughtered for diversion and envy, rapes and shameless abominations, violations of every law of man and humanity, gluttony and every excess, signalize the reigns of these monsters enthroned. The names of Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Vitellius, Heliogabalus, and some others that could be singled out, will justify our censures, and acquit us of the charge of calumny.

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To particularize their flagitious actions would be unnecessarily to invade the province of history, as few are so ignorant of the Roman records as to need it, though many will not rely on their own judgements, but content themselves with opinions ready made for their use. We have, it must be allowed, modern examples of bad princes, who have brought dishonour on royalty; but I much question if the interval of time from Tiberius, down to the Thirty Tyrants, can be matched in any succeeding age, for infamous lives and actions of princes, by the accounts we have of them in Suetonius, Tacitus, and some other historians.

As to the vices of that age among private persons, we may easily conceive to how great a pitch they had arrived, from the accounts of profligacy too glaringly painted by the honest indignation of Juvenal and some passages of Persius, to have seen the light. In them we find such enormities of the times exposed, as geniuses in vice might boast of; * such as would signalize this or any other age of the world. Let the innocent reader rack his invention, and his conceptions will come short of the originals.

The private history of Petronius, that pure writer of impurity, (as he has been ingeniously and properly stiled,) gives a fine opportunity of

* — Ob magnitudinem infamiae; cujus apud prodigos novissima voluptas est. TACIT. Annal.

of gueſſing at the ſpirit of the time in which he lived, under the auſpices of Nero. Let him that has nurſed up an opinion of the extraordinary purity and innocence of antiquity, conſult this and the above quoted authors, and he will not ſtand aghaſt at any accounts he reads of our own Engliſh metropolis.

Luxury is the great baſis of moſt modern vices. Gluttony was much indulged at Rome, as well as now. Their moſt poliſhed authors talk of, and deſcribe, good eating and drinking with ſuch a goſt as to make a hungry reader's mouth water. Their lampreys and other choice fiſh, their rare and far-fetched fowls, their ſauces and pickles, are known to every one acquainted with their writings. With what ſatisfaction does the younger Pliny garniſh a table in his epiſtles !

To talk of Roman elegance in dreſs might cauſe a modern beau to ſmile ; but they had their ornaments of gold, and ſilver, and jewels, and even their peacock-feather ſuits, as well as we. The *ventus textilis*, the *linea nebula*, (linen ſo fine as to acquire thoſe names,) may rival our boated lawns.

Frauds were not unknown. The art of making their limbs look ſore, by application of a corroding herb, to extort compaſſion, was uſed by beggars — a trick exquisite and refined ! The deluſive wiles of the prieſts and miniſters of their gods are well expoſed in the temporizing

and crafty humour of Tryphæna, at the temple of Priapus, on occasion of the death of the *sacred goose*. Cheats and thieves were known among them as well as now. Poisoning and stratagems to procure estates were not rare. Adultery had its examples in plenty: that piece of politeness was not left for modern invention. Villany in servants was so frequent, that *fur*, the old word used to distinguish that class, was afterwards restricted to signify *a thief*; a transition resembling that of our English word *knave*, which two hundred years ago meant *a servant*. It is tiresome to recapitulate every particular; that were to plunge into an ocean. There is no name for any vice in our language which cannot be expressed by a Roman word; and no vice which is not often mentioned by their authors. I mean not to assert that they were worse than in our age; but only that great degeneracy is a chimæra. If they talk not of telescopes, electricity, and gunpowder, they rival us in moral inventions.

Not entirely to rest our authorities on the Romans, we have no reason to adore the Greeks for their extraordinary purity. A bad man was not regarded by them with so much astonishment and dismay as a wild bull, or a two-headed monster. Such beings are mentioned as very common things. Diogenes, the cynic, used a lanthorn to find, what he could not by day-light, an honest man; and that the

greater part of men were bad, was the opinion of Bias. From the account of these venerable grey-beards one might conclude their contemporaries to have been worse than our own : We will pay them the negative compliment of being not much better. There are not such good private memoirs of dissolute persons to be found among their writings, as the Romans have left us, to disgrace their times. The biographical incidents respecting this nation are confined chiefly to virtuous men. Some bad characters are transmitted down to us, but they are such as are interwoven with general history. In other words, they have not a Juvenal or a Persius, a Petronius or a Horace, to expose their vices ; and Menander is lost. The principal satire against them is found in Aristophanes, who, it may be supposed, drew his pictures from real life. What abominable stuff has this writer called by the name of *comedies* ! Such an author would be silenced now, as a subject of abhorrence. In short, Turkey is the seat of ancient Greece.

One of the best qualities the ancients could boast of, was, that they did not worry one another for religion, and honour their Maker by destroying his works. Socrates is a rare example of such a sacrifice ; and he would probably have escaped the rage of Anytus, Melitus, and the rest of his persecutors, if he had started his dæmon a little more prudently, and not

not made so violent a stir about some innocent doctrines, insipidly recorded by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia*, and idolized by Plato. It was, however, very cruel thus to have treated an honest phrenzy.

Those crimes are to be deemed most flagitious which have the greatest tendency to destroy or hurt the human race. On this head, there are some heavy charges to be alleged against antiquity. War and ambition are too much indulged in our times, but they were still more unreasonably attended to in the earlier ages. Their hardier virtues were directed to this cruel purpose, even by some of their philosophers themselves. In pursuit of it they lost all regard to justice and humanity; and dignified their steadiness in this destructive trade by the comprehensive name of *virtue*. The poor victims of their fury had frequent cause to rue the consequences from want of generosity in the victors' treatment. — An extraordinary inclination to such violations as this will balance against numerous virtues; and the strictest private conduct among fellow-citizens will not atone for the ravages attending an invasion of others' possessions. If softness and effeminacy degrade some modern characters, roughness and ferocity had likewise their faults. They have both their concomitant blemishes: but especially the latter, which distinguish brutes from men.

Two other accusations shall be brought against the ancients, one of them unknown to Europe now. The first is, their exposing their new-born babes to perish, when the father did not choose to educate them. This is so cruel a violation of the law of nature, that one would imagine none but savages could be guilty of, and those of the most barbarous sort. The last particular I shall urge, is, the manner in which many of them treated those fellow-creatures they were pleased to make their slaves, and their ungenerous desertion of them when worn out in their service. If not in our country, yet many who are the subjects of it in another continent, I am well aware, are not innocent of this charge; and I only exhibit it as a proof that this example of injustice is not of modern growth, and that the ancients infringed the natural law as well as we. The charge may appear trifling in the opinion of a planter, but it really is not so. Without the additional exercise of cruelty towards these slaves, the assumed dominion over them without their consent is unwarrantable. Every son of nature, from the moment of his birth, is entitled to freedom, as his natural inheritance. If his inclination, or interest, subject him to another, his master has his concurrence for the authority he is vested with, which he may exercise as long as is by stipulation agreed, but no longer: he is but a temporary servant, and

and can demand back his liberty at pleasure. But absolute slavery can only be incurred by a delinquent, for the breach of some law of that society of which he professes himself a member, and whose protection he enjoys. This, and this only, is lawful slavery, which may yield a recompence for the losses of him that has been injured. Policy would prefer the infliction of this punishment to taking away a life that may be of service to the public. Death is insolvent : old Charon is the only gainer by it. To send a man into the other world for damage he has done in this is adding to the loss. Let him stay here and strain his nerves to repair it.

The limits of a chapter will not allow a more minute examination, and we must content ourselves with this general review from the accounts given by the writers of former times. In them we have abundant examples of every species of vice, if that will constitute them equally vicious with us : if not, I know not by what standard we are to ascertain the truth of the question in debate. Flattery itself, the varnish of vice, and bane of honesty, was not left for modern refinement. The basest characters of antiquity could find their panegyrists. Inventions in the arts have been more reserved for sagacious improvement than inventions in vice. Vice needs not much instruction : the scenes of many a single profligate present it in every form ; and profligates have been the growth of all ages.

Professions of virtue, I grant, may have been more frequent in former times than now ; but we are not thence to conclude that they had juster notions of it, or a larger share, than our contemporaries ; but that they had more ostentation. Stateliness and reserve mark the characters of antiquity : impudence and freedom are the characteristic of the moderns. The former chose rather to cloke their faults ; the latter as readily expose them.

If we make this distinction, that the vices of the ancients were more from nature, and those of the moderns rather the result of art, it will balance neither way ; for if the enthusiastic spirit of the former produced heroism in virtue, it likewise gave birth to heroism in vice. And if it be insisted on that mankind degenerates, it can only be attributed to the advancement of knowledge, as of pernicious tendency : but that is a concession I should make with regret. The doctrine of cause and effect (as there is an inseparable connexion between them) is of service in this and all other disquisitions. Though we were deprived of the assistance of records, we should not be entirely incapacitated to form some just conclusions. Men had the same passions in former ages as at present : and the same degrees of learning or ignorance must have, *cæteris paribus*, the same influence at all times. Travel into an ignorant English county, and you are in the nearest road to ancient

cient Greece and Rome, though you see not the temple of Diana, or the Capitol, before you.

A research into the remoter ages of antiquity, prior to Grecian and Roman splendor, is attended with insurmountable difficulties. Such fabulous accounts are interwoven with earlier annals as are an affront on common sense; and what are probable cannot be fully relied on, for more reasons than one. The more remote the period, the more ignorant the people; and the nearer their approach to brutes. The uncultivated and ruder nations have been much the same in every age of the world; and no argument can be drawn from any of them, of any moment in the present controversy. Their virtues and vices have been found nearly on a balance, such as nature has always laid the foundation for, and external accidents alone ripened into action.* It is more than probable that the barbarous ages in question were faithfully copied by the wild Indians, in the state wherein they were discovered by Americus and Columbus, by no means patterns for a race that has the privilege of reason.

Many have been much possessed with a great opinion of what is called *a state of nature*, with-

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out

* Πᾶσι γὰρ δοκεῖ ἕκαστα τῶν ἥλων ὑπάρχειν φύσει πως· καὶ γὰρ δίκαιοι, καὶ σωφρονικοί, καὶ ἀνδρείοι, καὶ τ' ἄλλα ἔχομεν εὐθὺς ἐκ γενετῆς· ἀλλὰ ὁμῶς ζητῶμεν ἵτις τὸν τι, τὸ κρείων ἀγαθὸν εἶναι. ARISTOT. Eth. lib. vi.

out refinement, imagining vices to be the work of time, and the simpler ages to have been patterns of purity, where law the public curb, and reason the private and familiar monitor, were not invited to check the unruly passions of nature : but this notion, upon examination, appears to be false and ideal. A state of nature is a state of war, confusion, and anarchy. But for reason, tygers, lions, and wolves, had been men as well as we.

It has been the fate of the most celebrated nations, that are known, to experience a fluctuation of virtues and vices, of prosperity and adversity, a revolution and return to their former condition, as Plutarch has long since observed, which, upon the whole, has worked but little change on the aggregate race of man. An irruption into England or France, by banditti of barbarians, would probably deprive their rising generations of what advantages they have derived from two thousand years, by the destruction of public records, the desolation of war, the loss of liberty, and the infection and tyranny of brutal manners. Rome and Greece are standing and convincing monuments of such a downfall.

Human nature has been in all ages a motley mixture of light and shade. The genius of science has no chosen spot for perpetual residence : and however particular causes have generated particular virtues, peculiar vices have been

been seen in their train. A total and universal change in the character of man is a prodigy as little to be expected, as that a brute should reason, or a fish should fly ; and though a few individuals may have been wrought on differently in different ages, men, collectively, ever have been, and ever will be, men. Antiquity may have been celebrated for their roughness, and the moderns for the softer refinements ; yet, on the whole, their virtues and vices seem to have nearly counterpoised each other, and great preference allowed to the former can be looked on but as a fond partiality, fit only for a Lipsius to cherish, who hated every thing that was modern ; and as very a folly as to be dying in love for Helen or Cleopatra, the former of which had only an apology for a nose, and the latter was a gypsy.

This general opinion of human degeneracy seems to have flowed partly from a natural partiality we all entertain for what is past and out of our reach ; † and partly from tradition and

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the

It is related of this celebrated lady, (I hope my fair readers will not burst with envy,) that she was so extravagantly delicate, as to have only two holes, by way of nostrils, in the room of that ugly prominence inferior beauties bear about them.

† Virtutem incolumem odimus ;

Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.

HORAT. l. iii. od. 23.

the fictions of the poets, such as Hesiod and Ovid, who have beautifully sung of the different ages. If we take notice of what ideas we have amused ourselves with in the course of our own private lives, or make observation on those who are advanced in years, we shall find very strong, though secret, traces of a partiality for former times. Every succeeding stage of life suffers in our approbation when compared with that which went before, whether there be just cause for the preference given, or not. Aged people, in particular, are exceeding prone to extol what they saw and did in their youth, as more extraordinary and memorable than the actions and scenes exhibited by their rising progeny. The focus of their minds, like that of their eyes, (to indulge a puerile comparison) increases in distance by the accumulating flatness of their organs, by which they see things afar off in the most favourable light, and they need external assistance for their mental decays, as well as additional convexity from optics, to clear their visual ray. The value of every action, the beauty of every scene, is exaggerated by length of time, and derives from it additional lustre; a fortunate circumstance for a Raphael, or an inferior master of Italy, whose colours and strokes are found more beautiful for age; which is an advantage the works of Nature cannot boast of.

Such

Such prejudices are visible in the progress of public and private affairs, and the notions of men in both those respects are built on the same foundation. The humour is old, and has been noticed upwards of three thousand years ago. The Grecian Nestor, who lived three ages, if Fame and the poets are not given to lying, thought little of the heroes that accompanied him to the siege of Troy, when he compared them in his mind with those he knew when a stripling. An Ajax that could hurl a rock, a Stentor whose voice would have reached from the Grecian camp to either pole, a Diomedes that wounded a goddess, and sent her wimpering away, and an Achilles who was so astonishingly spirited as to sit still in great wrath during the greatest part of the war, because they took his girl from him, were all nothing to their predecessors in heroism.

The last reason assigned for this prejudice, the fictions of the poets, founded on tradition, may to some appear insufficient to contribute to such an effect. But we are to consider what influence the poets had in former times. It is well known that their works were instrumental in forming schemes of religion, and that (particularly among the vulgar) the most ridiculous and absurd of their fables gained credit with the people. Poetry was esteemed sacred, and the poets, or bards, were accounted the am-

bassadors of heaven. It is not, then, surprising that a prettily-fancied story, of golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages, should have been in some degree seriously received, especially as it implied a more innocent state, in which man was originally placed, in vindication of the divine Architect.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XIV.

ON CONJECTURAL METAPHYSICS.

— Τοῖς δὲ φιλοσόφοις προειπεῖν μὴ ἀναπλάττειν
καὶ ὀνόματα, μηδὲ ληρεῖν περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἴσασιν. —

LUCIAN. Dec. Bon. Fort. [Momus loq.]

— Οὐ γὰρ δυνατόν τιλικῶτον πῆδημα πιθῆσαι τὰς ἡμε-
τέρας ἐνοίας, ὡς παρισωθῆναι τῇ ἀξίᾳ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν,
ὃ λέγω καὶ ὑπερπλῆναι. SIMPLIC. c. 38.

NEVER does a dwarf more naturally excite derision by his diminutive appearance than when he stands unhappily contrasted by the side of a giant. Had the frog in Æsop been content with the ordinary size of his brother frogs, without aspiring at the stature of an ox, he might not only have escaped the scorn attending on unsuccessful ambition, but have even deserved a compliment on his superiority over a fly for magnitude. — Not the sarcastic insult, but the salutary caution, contained in this fable, would I throw in the way of some philosophers; those, I mean, who trusting too much to the wings of their contemplation, fancy they can soar to heights beyond the reach of a son of Dædalus.

When

When men of genius and judgement exercise their talents in forming systems of morality, on the basis of justice, and on principles of general utility : when they amuse themselves with researches into the world of astronomy, and investigate the properties of motion, by mathematic aid : or when, in pursuit of knowledge, they dive into the bowels of the earth, and instruct themselves in the phænomena that are to be found in the province of natural history ; they add to their stock of real knowledge, and are in a capacity to make advances in what they undertake for the subject of their inquiries. By these, and similar disquisitions, (which depend on certain and uncontrovertible principles, and are open to industry and experiment,) the cause of learning is served, man becomes actually wiser, and (which is a pleasure denied the ideal and brain-sick philosopher,) the inquirer is rewarded with satisfaction for his labours.

How much the reverse is the lot of those, who think they can reduce to system the uncertain and imaginary positions of metaphysics, which are advanced in the doctrine of first causes, of the essence of the Deity, and of the abstract properties of intelligence ! If we examine the works of these airy adventurers, and place ourselves under their tuition and instruction, with a view to extend our views in the mental world, instead of meeting the expected lights we flatter ourselves will illuminate our
paths,

paths, we are involved in contradictions, wilds, and intricacies, from which we would with pleasure retreat, could we discover the winding road again that led us astray. If a man has a ladder to assist him in mounting a height without it inaccessible, he is not the object of derision for attempting to scale it ; but to lose his time and pains in a fruitless exploit is an example of Quixotism fit only for a wild metaphysician to engage in.

There are parts of metaphysics in which the deductions of reason and experience lend a clue to direct the curious enquirer ; from which some actual information may be derived. Under this head may Locke's observations on the human understanding be considered ; where he reasons of the generation and connexion of ideas, the propriety of conclusions drawn from given sensations, the impossibility of having any ideas without the previous action of the organs of the body,* and the like demonstrable doctrines, which

* That the mind of man, previous to the information of the senses, is a *tabula rasa*, a blank, without ideas, without knowledge, is a doctrine too well supported by this great master of reason to suffer a shock. It has been, notwithstanding, attacked, with arguments drawn from professor Saunderson, who excelled in the mathematics, and was acquainted with the properties of cones, cylinders, squares, circles, &c. though blind from a year old.

The

which are within the circle of man's capacity, and compose a system without chimæra and conjecture.

The following reply to Mr. Locke's opponent is submitted to the ingenious reader's judgement.

To the Author of the Royal Magazine.

SIR,

In your Magazine for August, 1760, we find some animadversions on Mr. Locke's hypothesis, that ideas arise only from sensation and reflection; which, he apprehends, is disproved in the person of professor Saunderson, who was blind from a twelvemonth old, and, according to him, incapable of being supplied by his senses at that time. But there are two reasons, I would insist on, which induce me to think his determination a little too precipitate.

First, then, it may be inquired, whether there be no connexion, similarity, or communication, between the senses, by which, upon defect of one of these direct vehicles of idea, another may, indirectly, in some measure, supply its place. To me it appears more than probable that there is. Feeling and tasting are esteemed different senses: yet I humbly conceive, that, if the latter were lost, the former might partly perform its office; and that the acrimonious pungency of salt to the taste may be distantly represented by its asperity to the touch. Add to this the pertinent conclusion of a Danish physician, [Hagerup,] who maintained, that a man might hear by means of his teeth, in the following

conjecture. Of a different kind are some doctrines, which have been dignified with the name of *science*, a name applicable only to what is to be known by man — Systematical positions of uncertainties are what I mean should be rejected ; arguments drawn from the futile circumstances of humanity, and applied to illustrate the intentions, nature, and actions of deity ; properties of knowable effects predicated of hidden causes, not cognizable by the most subtle examination, and farther perplexed the

lowing manner. If you stop your ears close, and an iron bar be grated near you, the sound is lost ; but if it be applied to the teeth, and touch them, the effect will be very sensible. This experiment, though it be not strictly admitted, will illustrate the point in question.

If the above reasons are at all conclusive, as to me they appear to be, they will confirm, and be confirmed by, another consideration, what additional help Saunderson must have received from the circumstance of his retaining his sight a year after his birth : which is the second argument I would offer, without the other to corroborate it, preferable to a rejection of so well-received an hypothesis.

As to the conclusion, I heartily subscribe to it — That the whole creation is a series of wonders, above human comprehension : and that though the sagacity of man has discovered that sensation is the fountain of ideas, yet how that sensation is performed, is a process he is at a loss to account for.

the more they are discussed. To dive into this conjectural part of metaphysics is but to reproach our reason with its weakness, and to court disappointment. The inexplicable maze, the apparent contradictions, in which our sagacity is lost when it would comprehend the secrets of superior wisdom should by this time have taught our men of learning that *there are some things above their capacity*, however they may flatter themselves with the extent of it. The best and most ingenious plan of theocracy that ever was published has its perplexities. It may be expected that some instance of this should be given. Instances are ready at hand, and easy to be produced. We will adduce a very familiar one. The established and much admired scheme of providence, as given by Pope in his Essay on Man, may seem to satisfy at first, but it is calculated only to amuse inattention. In this scheme we are told, that a provision by *general* laws cannot exclude *particular evils*; and that it thence necessarily follows, that some evils must be endured by the very nature of such a general constitution. But alas! how weak are our strongest reasonings! An unfortunate question here starts up, Why it should be the will of the Deity to act by general, in preference to particular, laws? Till such a query is satisfactorily answered, I cannot be of opinion that our imperfect systems of philosophy can account for every instance of Arimanian leaven

leaven the universe presents to us. When I
 am favoured with an unanswerable solution of
 the difficulty, I shall think myself much wiser
 than before, and prostrate myself before the ex-
 plainer as a superior being. But it is not from
 metaphysics I expect it. The light must pro-
 ceed from that Fountain of intelligence which
 is entitled to our homage without the charge of
 idolatry. Must then the boasted philosopher be
 dumb? — Yes: he has but to lament his own
 littleness, and to make a merit of his modesty.
 To search farther into this secret were as vain
 and fruitless as reiterated attempts to see through
 a mill-stone, which cannot be effected by the
 help of our present optics. — Some, more
 subtle and ingenious than their neighbours, as
 the easiest way to explain the existence of a God,
 deny it. This is indeed plunging into a river
 to escape a shower. An author who wrote a-
 bout a century ago, in his chapter of atheists,
 asserts, on the testimony of another, that there
 were computed to be fifty thousand in the city
 of Paris only: I am sorry to add, that, if his
 author asserted a truth, there was at least the
 same number of fools. — Atheism is the top of
 absurdity. The doctrine of an *anima mundi*, or
 that man is a part of God, is infinitely wiser than
 atheism — What greater difficulty is there in
 conceiving the existence of a deity, than in
 conceiving our own existence? We know that
 we exist: we see traces of wisdom superior to
 our

our brightest intellects, instances of design we could never have devised, and yet some of our race have been weak enough to reject the positive evidence of their senses, in favour of negative conclusions, contrary to the laws of both reason and jurisprudence.

Not to rest on one example of difficulties that set our reason at defiance, we may ask, Who, after all the arguments wasted on the subject, can digest the idea of creation in time, or existence from eternity, when applied to visible, tangible matter? An universal vacuum is the only possible idea man can form, as to conceive nothing is the easiest conception; and even that is loaded with the embargo of space, which is elegantly termed, the *sensorium* of God. Neither the sagacious gloss of a Newton, which leaves us the evidence of experience and our senses, nor the subtleties of a Berkley, which put them to flight, can overleap that bourne of our understandings, which separates deity from the encroachments of humanity.

There are many other points in this department of science, which are thus involved in darkness, to extricate ourselves from which we are quite at a loss whether we shall throw by our senses, or not; but these two shall suffice to shew that there are clouds that still do, and ever will, obscure the sunshine of metaphysical philosophy. The great secret that pallid looks and meagre face derive to the enquirer from these reveries, is only this, *that he*

knows

knows nothing of the matter. He finds, indeed, that he has travelled a great way, but has the mortification to be informed, that he is not a whit nearer the goal than when he at first set out. He is as much bewildered, with all his philosophy about him, as the man, who simply *‘wondered how houses came at first.’*

What I have restrictively alleged against parts of this science has been comprehensively applied, by an illustrious writer, to the whole. *‘As for metaphysics, they are a bubble of air. They are a country, in which a traveller is lost amongst precipices and abysses: and I am persuaded that Nature never intended us for her privy-councillors, but as ministers to execute her plans.’* *

When our common experience, or when arguments that will not brook an objection, evince a truth, by the assistance of rational logic, our pains are well bestowed. The existence of a superior power, for example, is a thing so certain to an observer of his works, and, at the same time, a point of such moment to mankind, as to call aloud for the exercise of our mental faculties

* Pour la metaphyque, c’est — un ballon enflé de vent. Quand on ne fait tant que de voyager dans ce-pays-là, on s’égare entre des precipices & des abymes: & je me persuade, que la Nature ne nous a point faits pour deviner ses *secrets*, mais pour co-operer au plan qu’elle s’est proposé d’exécuter. Fr. R. de P.

faculties to consider it. But it is not a consequence that man is either able or obliged to explain the nature of that Power so loudly proclaimed.* — In the present sublunary scene of things there are certain conveniences and fitnesses, certain appearances and regularities, which flatter and amuse within the human sphere, but would become eccentric in an uncircumscribed orb. As well might we, like children, fancy that the great Author of all is clothed in robes of purple or scarlet, because they are beautiful colours, as apply our mean ideas for the measures and standards of his immensity.

To compare great things with small, we will, with some authors,† consider the human soul as an epitome of the deity, as it is the seat of intelligence, and the nearest pattern of him we can imagine. Yet how much at a loss are we to conceive the properties of this fragment of intelligence! It appears a task as arduous for the soul to dive into itself, as for a man to bear himself up into the air without external assistance. Surely, then, if we are unable to comprehend our own intellectual part, we must be in

* *Tenuis enim natura deum, longeque remota
Sensibus a nostris, animi vix mente videtur.*

LUCRET. lib. v.

† *Ὁ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ ὡς τὸ θεοῦ.* ARRIAN. l. ii. c. 8.

in a perfect incapacity to settle the properties of supreme intelligence. *

If the truth were known, the doubts of many a simple atheist are to be attributed to nothing so much as to the imperfect systems formed on this subject, and set up as standard doctrine. Whereas, instead of describing what they could not comprehend, had our philosophers more insisted on the inexplicable nature of the Deity, and respectfully left it in that inaccessible and awful retreat wherein they found it, modesty would not have suffered these wavering minds to doubt of what is more out of the reach of their calculations than the unknown quantity in algebra, and not to be brought to light by the most subtle deductions. But weakly taking for granted, that the best systems of metaphysics that *had been* published were the best that *could be* formed, even by a being of superior sagacity, they rejected them all, together with the basis on which they stood, from motives of dissatisfaction.

This confidence in our own judgements is common to us with every creature. It is natural for us to think the conceptions we have formed perfectly adequate to truth : prejudice must appear under its colours, or it could not meet

Οὗτος ἔδωκε τὴν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἰσχυρίαν πληρῶσαι δυναμί-
τοι, προσλαμβάνοιεν τὴν τῷ φιλοσόφῳ, τῆλικετο φορτίον,
εἶον εἰ τις, δέκα λίτρας ἔχει μὴ δυνάμειν, τὸ τῷ ἰσχυρῶς
λίτον βαρύνει πάλιν. ARRIAN. l. ii. c. 2.

meet an asylum. The brute creation cherish some peculiar notions, incident to their condition, and regulate their actions in conformity with those notions. Every idle conception of theirs they doubtless are as well satisfied with as we are with the sprightliest efforts of our boasted reason. They are guided by instinct, and the bias of some trifling circumstance, which together constitute a knowledge not capable of universal application, from the absurdity of the *data* they assume. From these brutes, with the learned Grotius, we will borrow a hint ; and conclude, that as they cannot comprehend the nature of man, but, on the contrary, entertain ridiculous ideas of him, so neither ought we to be too forward in undertaking to unravel the mysteries of the Deity, who is infinitely more distant from us than we are from the brute creation.

Tho' the late lord Bolingbroke deserves the censor's lash for those parts of his works where he disturbs revelation, the pleasing shade he has thrown on nature, in other passages of his writings, by vindicating the conduct of the Deity from his necessary physical attributes only, (which are to be cautiously handled,) may be deemed beneficial to natural religion. That his lordship was an utter enemy to revelation, is most certain ; but it does not appear that he had the smallest tincture of atheism. So far from it, that he has contributed to dispel that gloom

gloom that the supposed absence of a deity would spread over the minds of men : and he is, upon the whole, the most chearful, if not the most temperate, deistical writer this nation has produced.

The whole of this dispute brings to mind the ludicrous story that is related of St. Basil. Once on a time a conceited pretender to science troubled that venerable father with vaunting boasts, that he knew the nature of God. The good orthodox bishop, to curb his vanity, instead of entering on a discussion of so abstruse a subject, began by examining him about humbler points, and puzzled him with three and twenty questions concerning the body of an ant. I fear this might have been the case of many a more skilful, and less vain, pretender than this empty man.

The words of Ovid will probably be quoted by some, as a short and sufficient answer to this whole chapter :

Nec tam
Turpe fuit vinci quam contendisse decorum est :

and urged as an apology for every the most extravagant exercise of curiosity. A thirst after knowledge, and, in consequence, every attempt to advance it, will my opponent urge, is laudable in the very intention of it. This shall be allowed. I profess myself as great an

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advocate

advocate for enquiry as any one ; and only mean to insinuate that, as there are some things which elude human sagacity, it is the mark of a wise man not eternally to pursue what with equal pace flies before him, has fled before every one that has undertaken the chase, and has all the appearance of an endless repetition of the same delusion ; and to warn men not to advance for certainty what, after all, may be but the creation of a fertile fancy ; since, by separating doubtful positions from real knowledge, we as much serve the cause of the latter, as we mend our wheat by removing from it the tares that choke it.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XV.

THE UNREASONABLE COMPLIMENTS PAID
TO THE ANCIENTS FOR THEIR WORKS,
EXEMPLIFIED IN HOMER.

————— *Bonus dormitat Homerus.*

HORAT. de Art. Poet.

AMONG the accusations to be laid to the account of prejudice, the preference adjudged to the ancients for genius, as well as virtue, may make no inconsiderable figure. Their innocence, their courage, their skill in writing, have been extolled as superior to our modern accomplishments, and proposed as the proper standards by which those several excellences are to be estimated. This partiality is in no instance more notorious than in the character given to the *ILIAD*, which has been, by many succeeding writers, pronounced the most perfect piece of poetry that was ever penned. Him, therefore, we will fix on, to exemplify the effects of literary prejudice.

Few authors have received their laurels in their life-time: that compliment has been generally reserved for their statues. Possibly the world may have judged it preposterous to honour any one with an apotheosis before his death. Homer was once a ballad-singer; is now a bard. Shakespear lived a precarious hireling. Milton's divine poem lay long neglected, and was sold for a song. Otway lived and died in a corner. Cervantes passed his days in obscurity and poverty, a reproach to Spain. The first of English philosophers, the immortal Newton, needed the officious kindness of a Barrow to announce his merit. Praise is slower in its progress than censure, because retarded by the clog of envy and contention, which time alone, that subdues all things, can remove. The case is the same in the moral, as in the natural, world. The sun never exhibits so large a disk as when on the point of leaving our hemisphere.

In pitching on Homer, I will premise, that I have made him a representative, in general, of those authors who have acquired a prejudged hereditary admiration. It is not, in fact, Homer, so much as prejudice, that claims our censures, visible in many established opinions. His happiness, when he is considered as a complete epic poet, like that of many of the ancients, consists in coming first into the world. The eldest son in a family runs away with the patrimony,

patrimony, to the loss of those who have the misfortune to come later into the world ; and the first-born authors have been favoured, by custom, with the same privilege. But that is a precedent in literary laws not backed by reasons so good as family ones.

Not in poetry alone ; in painting and statuary a fancied superiority has been allowed the predecessors in those arts. We will not deny their having such fine performances among them as would have done honour to any age or nation ; but to grant them the merit of exclusive excellence is injustice to their competitors for fame. Have not men the same hands as formerly, and more improvements in understanding ? the same fingers and nerves, and more models to copy from ? and are not those arts as much cultivated as heretofore ? To what charm then can this superiority, or this prepossession, be attributed ? The works of a Reynolds, a Roubillac, a Casali, and a Pine, ought to have banished so ridiculous a prejudice.

The most tolerable and plausible reasons for a partiality for the old writers are drawn from a principle of tenderness. The infant state of learning, it may be urged, ought to experience the same mild treatment which is shewn to infant babes. I should allow the full extent of this plea in any case where a comparison with others did not interfere, and consider

them under all the disadvantages of inexperience. But the respect due to candor will oblige us to own, that it is as improper to set up such infant authors, with all their inaccuracies, for perfect models, as it would be to present a boy seven years old for a specimen of a perfect man. I know not in what light our critics of the male gender would view such a pattern, but I am very certain the ladies would reject it as a very insufficient one.

Many an old writer, who has deserved admiration for real beauties, has had his reputation sullied by those who applaud him for imaginary ones : by which, instead of his being indebted to his panegyrists for their praises, they have given occasion for doubts and censures where he least deserved them. This is a circumstance notoriously the case of a celebrated English dramatic poet. As if Shakespear had not interspersed beauties enough to merit our applause, his very faults have been erected into perfections, and idolized — A manner of expressing approbation designed indeed to serve the author, but really tending to injury him. The most effectual way to expose a lady that has her blemishes, is to extol her for a paragon of beauty. She would soon experience the bad consequences of the intemperate encomiums passed on her, in the merciless criticisms her envied representation raised. Not that I intend to insinuate a want of beauties in this ornament

of our country : he has too many shining excellencies to need a compliment on his puns, quaintnesses, and other puerilities, found in his works. ——— Probably this indiscrete zeal for favourite authors may have secretly induced so puny a critic as myself to have dealt, with a misgiving heart and trembling hand, a few well-meant censures on the Grecian bard, which I would not for the world should be construed as the effects of envy, or a malevolent itch for de-traction.

But to come to our purpose. I will begin by remarking, that my aim is only to direct the praise, that has been so profusely lavished on this classic, to a proper object ; to oppose the *genius of Homer* to the *perfection of the Iliad* : which I hope will bear the aspect of good-nature and candor. That his genius was great, none but a Scaliger would deny, who sacrificed the reputation of him and other poets at the shrine of his favourite Juvenal. Envy herself would scarcely have the effrontery to disown that his pinions were formed to reach the very top of Parnassus ; and that nothing but the iniquity of the time in which he lived retarded his flight. Where he does exert himself, (which is not seldom,) he is superlatively lofty ; his images are bold, and his expression is admirable. Notwithstanding, the same genius, which has inspired him with the greatest beauties, has likewise hurried him on to the grossest absurdities.

His rude masses of diamonds are intermixed with heaps of rubbish. It will be a distinct charge, not affecting his genius, to assert that he was deficient in judgement and choice, as there are many glaring proofs of it visible throughout his poem. This accusation is applicable to our Milton himself, (whose opportunities of improving on his predecessors were no inconsiderable advantages over them,) and therefore it ought not to surprise if Homer deserved it. The Greek poet is fond of a simile to excess. He not only abounds in that figure, but often adopts comparisons ridiculous, improper, and mean. Sometimes his similitude is less striking than the thing or circumstance compared — a fault that destroys the very intention of it, which is to paint in the most lively colours what we would represent. Provided the resemblance be pretty or striking, it matters not whether a sublime or heavenly form be compared to a familiar or earthly one, or *vice versa*; but there must be a vivacity in the simile: For example, we may compare the morning to a blushing maid, or a blushing maid to the morning, without an affront to either; but it would be an indignity to both to liken them to the red bricks of a house, or to a bunch of carrots. Homer, and many of the ancients besides Homer, who dealt too largely in similes, have been, at times, betrayed into like improprieties.

Another

Another principal objection to be alleged against the *Iliad* is, not only a nauseous sameness in the story, a perpetual kill, kill, kill, fight, fight, fight, in which all his heroes are equal to Mars, but likewise an eternal jingle of the same words: which fault is eminently conspicuous in the catalogue of the *black ships* destined for the expedition against Troy. It is to be supposed, that what the poet did in that particular he esteemed a beauty, and that, from a mistaken notion, he imagined his repetitions would grace his poem: which is a pity indeed, as a genius, like Homer's, might have suggested a variety of descriptions, had not his want of judgement misled him.

I am unwilling to animadvert on the absurdity of the fable, where the gods interpose in a most ridiculous manner in the affairs of his heroes, and are wounded by mortals, as I apprehend we are indebted to their visible presence for some of the most shining descriptions. It has been long since observed that Homer makes men of his gods, and gods of his men. It were to be wished too that he, as well as Milton, had less insisted on the penchant both those orders of beings had to filling their bellies, as it is a circumstance bringing with it the most humiliating ideas, and therefore judiciously censured by a modern critic.*

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Among

* See Dr. Newton's notes on Milton.

Among the beauties inspired by the presence of the gods may be numbered that celebrated passage noticed by Longinus and others, in the beginning of the twentieth book, where the divinities, enlisted on both sides, assemble, to take part in the fight. What an awe does the poet there excite in the mind by the loftiness and terror of his description. Pluto himself did not start with greater amaze at the tremendous concussion, caused by the descent of the immortals from Olympus, than will a reader wearied by a round of unvaried description before, and unprepared for so grateful a change.

No want of genius has yet been, or shall at all be, imputed to Homer ; only a want of variety in the Iliad. He has discovered an ability for changing his scenes ; would he had oftener exercised that ability, for the relief of his readers. We find he could be soft and tender, as well as grand, when he pleased. His picture of the infant Astyanax, turning from his father Hector, on account of his grim appearance when in armour, is a proof of it. Such a trifling incident, simply described, has more real beauty in it than whole pages of pompous declamation.

The beginning of the poem is so esteemed as to have been copied by Virgil, Tryphiodorus, Milton, and others, not to mention the imitations of other parts made by Calaber. They were all so much his admirers, as to draw from his

his fountain. The prayer of the venerable Chryses, priest of Apollo, to his god, his silent grief for the contumelious treatment of Agamemnon, and that chief's refusal to restore him his daughter Chryseis, are all naturally and affectingly described; and I cannot at all join in opinion with a late author, whose name, if published, has escaped my memory, when he asserts that the line expressing that silent grief of the old priest is the only good one in Homer, as that is doing him great injustice. The prediction of Priam, setting forth the calamities attending the downfall of Troy, is feeling and picturesque; it is misery arrayed in her fairest dress, and horror painted in ink.

On the other hand, I must beg to be excused if I cannot comprehend all the mysterious beauties and hidden excellencies, couched under particular lines and words, that some sharp-sighted critics have fathered on the innocent poet, where, God knows, he never dreamt of them himself. Some of the onomatopœias he, doubtless, intended, but the remark is not levelled at them; there are other discoveries which no reader who is not a wire drawing critic could ever have made. It is well known to have been the food of commentators to find out what no unbiassed person could see without their assistance. How nicely his annotators scanned and spelt every word he wrote, may be gathered from some of their observations. In the first

book there is an important discovery of Plutarch's, quoted by Dr. Clarke, at which a reader cannot withhold a smile: that grave old writer finds out a line containing all the grammatical parts of speech. Though I would not dogmatically pronounce, that he supposed this an excellence, I may safely say it is not at all unusual for an annotator to have called such a trifle a beauty in his favourite author. Of a piece with this remark is another, made (if my memory fail not) by the good archbishop of Thessalonica, the venerable Eustathius, on a line which begins with a monosyllable, that is followed by a dissyllable, and so increases in progression to the end. But that commentator is always a very loyal trumpeter of Homer's fame, if he is not always a very wise one: and where we can derive no critical instruction from his remarks, we may gather this moral truth, that young and old, simple and learned, have alike their rattle.

But one of the most insufferable of all discoveries, is that which would torture out a moral meaning, and precepts of virtue, from a poem which does not afford the least sanction for it. There is a possibility of being too sharp-sighted, as well as too blind. Because Homer had lost his sight, and could not see these wonders himself, his critics compassionately perform the kind office for him, and generously lend him the use of their optics, for the advantage of posterity.

It

It would have been surely an agreeable circumstance for this old poet, could he have risen from the dead, to be informed of many particulars in his own poem to which he was a stranger when alive; and to have thankfully acknowledged the great obligations he lay under to his several friends among his posterity, who have been so officious in his behalf, as to have exposed their own want of judgement in misplaced and ill-judged encomiums, bestowed on an author, for what he never did, or intended, in spite of truth, decency, and common sense.

What fugitive remarks I have made (for I have intended no regular critique) are such as result from my own private judgement, unbiassed by the fondness of commentators, or the carping criticism of professed cavillers, those worms of literature. From an impartial and general survey, I am of opinion, that, under all the disadvantages in which Homer laboured, his genius is deservedly to be extolled; but that had a modern undertaken to write on the same subject, and acquitted himself in the same manner, (the memory of Homer being obliterated) his performance would have been esteemed a strange medley of genius and absurdity, of beauty and deformity. Have we him not in English to advantage, his admirers will say? Has not Pope translated him, and is he not liked in the dress that poet has clothed him in? — True, he has given him in English; but

but he has polished him where he needed it, and faithfully represented his beauties. The bald and uncouth passages he has amended; and reinforced the whole with his own advantages of judgement, in such a manner as to have been complimented for excelling the original; which is rarely the case of a translator. — Had he rendered him more literally, by transfusing his faults, as copiously as his beauties, into the English edition, many passages, I fear, would have appeared, without design, burlesque on epic poetry.

I have neither attempted to observe on all his faults, nor to enumerate all his perfections: what I have taken notice of is in support of the view with which I set out, of condemning hereditary prejudice: in the prosecution of which design, I have been as free in my censures, as I have been frank in my acknowledgements of beauties. Candor is my idol: I still revere, as though it were never so new, that worn-out adage — *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas*. It is almost with regret that I mention the blemishes of this venerable monument of antiquity; but truth is still more venerable. I could with pleasure hear an author again and again extol the genius of such a poet as Homer, if he would not insist on the perfection of his works. It is possible, nay, common, for a writer to have glaring faults, and yet at the same time possess extraordinary

dinary talents : the Greek and the English poet shall be both our vouchers for it, as that was literally their case. It is not at all astonishing, that at the remote period of antiquity in which Homer lived, when he had none of the advantages of criticism to correct his mistakes, he did not reach perfection in every point. He has, unassisted, better acquitted himself than could have been expected from the single abilities of one writer so ancient ; and many of his brilliants are lost upon the sight, for want of being properly disposed and polished.

The *Odyssey*, which has been generally esteemed an inferior production, may so far be preferred to the *Iliad*, as it contains greater variety in fable and description. The scenes are different in different parts, and the mind is not so surfeited by a disgust which ever arises at want of change. And, in point of refinement, the *Æneid* has much the advantage of the *Iliad*, though it cannot be opposed to it for originality of genius. Notwithstanding, such is the praise due to judgement, (which is to be prized as a secondary or artificial genius,) that those fine thoughts, which Virgil has evidently stolen from Homer, are so extremely well dressed by his skill, that they are almost to be considered as his own, and none but a Momus would deny him his commendation for it. Imitators, by borrowing excellences, and throwing blemishes aside, (when we divest ourselves of prejudice against

against their servility,) run away with their share of praise. It is, in fact, extraordinary, that he should have played his part so very judiciously as we find him to have done. He may, in this respect, challenge a superiority over our Milton, who was posterior to him in time, and yet has more striking blemishes in his *Paradise Lost*, as well as more unmusical and harsh lines. This latter circumstance is perhaps chargeable to the excellence of the Roman language, which has dignity and softness combined, and is free from the many harsh and guttural words, such as *which, what, through, &c.* which disgrace our tongue. It ought, in my private opinion, to be preferred to the Greek itself, which is more licentious, rough, and boisterous, and (among the poets) loaded with an embargo of paltry monosyllables, expletives, and enclitics — Though I fear the resentment of some Hellenistic admirers for what I have advanced.

The very circumstance of the *Æneid's* superiority over *Paradise Lost* for correctness (I do not say for genius) is, if admitted, an additional argument to evince, that peculiar beauties are not confined to particular ages. Partial excellences, and universal perfection, are widely different, and there ought to be a greater distinction between them than is generally made. Had this been always the case, so many prejudices in favour of the ancients had not been propagated

propagated from age to age : judgement had not been opposed to genius, nor genius to judgement ; but every author and every artist, every age and every nation, had enjoyed their share of praise.

But to what a length has my journey into Greece led me ! It is time to begin my return into my own country, lest I weary my reader by dragging him so far from the place of his nativity, and detaining him there, contrary to the laws of justice, and his own inclination.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XVI.

REFLECTIONS ON MATRIMONY.

*Our Maker bids increase ; who bids abstain
But the destroyer, foe to God and man ?*

MILTON.

HUMAN perverseness, in courting infelicity, is visible in many particulars and situations ; but the charge is to no condition more applicable than to the connubial state ; a state which, at a distance, smiles on the lover, and promises blessings without limits ; but, in the end, by overweening expectation, by the frowns of Fortune, or by the ingenuity of a sour disposition, too frequently cheats him of the promised bliss, and even robs him of the last consolation, hope, ‘ which comes to ail.’

With casuists, whether celibacy or wedlock be the happier state, has been as much the subject of enquiry as any point that was ever contested. To such questions it may, in general, be replied, that the human mind insensibly and gradually squares itself to, and familiarizes, every condition. If we desire a more particular

lar solution of the problem, the experience of two thousand years has not framed a juster than what Socrates has left behind him: which implies, that, for the generality, *which ever you do, whether you marry, or abstain, you will repent.**

The attracting coyness of the female, (I must betray my sex) singled out from the rest of her companions, captivates the fond lover's heart, and he measures happiness by the standard of her charms: Nature insidiously avails herself of the glow of youth, and the lovers are caught in her toils. Bliss, contrary to other appearances, seems more considerable at a distance. The happiness attending a completion of the lover's wish, if he is given to sanguine expectation, proves, in process of time, inadequate to the great conceptions he had formed, and his disappointment diminishes his wished felicity. That delicacy which at first allured him is gone. Familiarity breeds contempt. Under the rose lurks the prickly thorn. Lovers dwindle, men into husbands, women into wives. These are the evils that await untutored minds.† When Nature is called on to answer all the demands of those her greedy creditors, Hopes and

* Ἐρωτηθεὶς [Σωκράτης] πότερον γῆμαι, ἢ μὴ, ἔφη, Ὅ ἂν ἀνὴρ ποιήσῃς μεταγνώσῃ. DIOG. LAERT.

† Sperat infestis, metuit secundis,
Alteram sortem, bene præparatum
Pectus. ——— HOR. lib. ii. od. 10.

and Wishes, she is constrained to own herself a bankrupt.

The celibate, alike unsatisfied with his situation, fancies, and with reason, that there are sweets in wedded love, which his solitary lot has deprived him of. He has no partner to share his bed and his thoughts : no bosom-friend in whom to repose his confidence. Unblessed with the cheering influence of that passion which is a refinement on friendship, he wanders about a vagabond without an owner, and feels the earth groan under him as a burden.

But whether or not marriage be a point of indifference in the mind of an individual, the promotion of it is certainly of great moment as a concern of state, and even when considered in a moral light, and on those accounts merits the attention of the public, as well as of individuals. Every one that does not, when opportunity allows him, contribute his mite to the general cause, robs the state of members, and the universe of beings. He lives on the common stock, and meanly refuses to enhance its riches.

A great cause for this desertion is the blindness of Fortune in conferring her favours. On the laborious and needy man, who is not unnerved by luxury, she frequently bestows children without number, and from him who rolls in wealth withholds even an heir to his possessions, because, as a celebrated physician has observed,

served, he waters his plants with spices. To remedy this unequal distribution is the business of legislature. The example was long ago set by the Romans, in a distribution of a stated sum for a more than equal burden of children, and recommendations to imitate that example have been urged by several writers. A fund ought, in justice, to be established for the assistance of those needy members who have been too successful in their labours for the public good, to which every one, and in particular those who are single, should be obliged to contribute. The burden would then be divided.

This might be a state remedy to render the condition of marriage more comfortable, which is all that laws can do. The counter-part to public endeavours after this end, is a readiness in those who have given the mutual pledge of affection to exert their good-nature, and strive to please the partners of their hearts. But that disposition is not so general as were to be wished. It is found to be the principal employment of many an ill-mated pair to labour to disturb each other's repose, by way of qualifying what they esteem a bitter potion. Where friends and neighbours, brothers and sisters, would agree, husband and wife are seen at variance.

But perhaps a sprightly intermixture of gay reflexion may relieve the reader's mind : it is not the genius of the age to be wedded to dull morality.

morality. On the subject of matrimony there is a little poem, so replete with beautiful turns, brilliant thoughts, and pertinent reflections, that I would even labour to introduce it, in spite of the critic's lash, and in contempt of propriety; and, rather than not revive the memory of it, force it on the reader, if it has escaped his notice. Were I to reveal a secret, I would own that I chose to descant on the subject for the sake of my author's beauties. The poem has been some years made public, amongst others, though it has not been noticed according to its merit, perhaps on account of the pious character of the author, whose seat allotted him on Parnassus has not been conspicuous or elevated, however well he has acquitted himself in the little piece I am about to subjoin. Now, Proteus-like, will I change the form I at first assumed, and take on me that of a scholiast. — That nothing may be lost, we will begin with the exordium, though it contains no moral sentiment for the purpose of information.

*Say, mighty LOVE, and teach my song
To whom thy sweetest joys belong;
And who the happy pairs,
Whose yielding hearts and joining hands
Find blessings twisted with their bands,
To soften all their cares?*

After

After this invocation our author proceeds to enumerate the several evils that await unpromising choices ; and begins with the most common error, want of reflection.

*Not the wild herd of nymphs and swains
That, thoughtless, fly into the chains,
As custom leads the way.
If there be bliss without design,
Ivies and oaks may grow and twine,
And be as blest as they.*

This is a picture of the greater part of marriages in general. It is notorious that many young pairs are influenced by no motive but that of opportunity. A frequenting the same company, a next-door residence, or any the most trivial circumstance, has laid the foundation of numberless alliances, without any other choice than that of either rejecting or embracing the matrimonial state. A *man*, or a *woman*, in these cases, is the object of wishes, not a *faithful partner*. The happiness attending such a combination must, in course, be merely casual.

*Not sordid souls of earthly mould,
Who, drawn by kindred charms of gold,
To dull embraces move.
So two rich mountains of Peru
May rush to wealthy marriage too,
And make a world of love.*

The marrying gold, instead of a human being, has been long the subject of satire, and in all probability will long continue so. Husbands and wives buy each other by weight, as they would the basest commodities. — But if our adventurer pays his devotion to the god Plutus alone, he must not expect that Venus will hear his petitions in his stead, and shower her blessings on the worshipper of another deity. The ingeniously ludicrous idea my author has given of this choice deserves a plaudit.

*Not the mad tribe which lust inspires
With wanton flames : those raging fires
The purer bliss destroy.
On Ætna's top let furies wed,
And sheets of light'ning dress the bed,
T'improve the burning joy.*

This is a satire on those whose amours can boast no mixture of sentiment ; a circumstance that levels a man with the brutes. — Happiness does not result from unholy fires ; a purer flame alone can produce it. But as the profaneness against the divinity of Love here censured brings with it indelicate ideas, we will cut our comment short, and proceed to descant on the contrary extreme of insensibility. —
Procul, O procul, este, profani.

Not

*Not the dull pairs, whose marble forms
 None of the melting passions warms,
 Can mingle hearts and hands.
 Logs of green wood that quench the coals
 Are married just like Stoic souls,
 With ozers for their bands.*

However we may condemn brutality, some hidden share of sensual desire is mixed up in our heaven, to warm the heart. The delicate glow of benevolence, which is found in pure love, atones for, and supercedes, every admixture of indelicacy which too analytical an inspection presents to the mind. Man is neither a brute, nor a spirit; but a compound of both.

*Not minds of melancholy strain,
 Still silent, or that still complain,
 Can the dear bondage bless.
 As well may heav'nly concerts spring
 From two old lutes with ne'er a string,
 Or none beside the bass.*

The dismal gloom of mind is not a proper seat for love, though it is actually a serious passion. Silent sorrow, and silent joy, can have only an external resemblance. Melancholy, like the sickly jaundice, spreads an unpleasing veil over every joy, and damps the nobler passions of the heart. The querulous notes of
 I fretfulness

fretfulness are discord in love, and must not be joined in a concert which breathes harmonious accents. Plaintive strains suit only the hapless lover, whose desires are as yet unblest.

*Nor can the soft enchantments hold
Two jarring souls of angry mould,
The rugged and the keen.*

*Samson's young foxes might as well
In bonds of chearful wedlock dwell,
With firebrands ty'd between.*

Common life too frequently presents this scene to our observation. Rather than overlook trifling failures, or foibles, in each other's conduct, the ill-natured pair are wont to put the most unfavourable construction on every incident. Such tempers deserve not happiness, nor ever find it, whether they wear the chains, or not. Every condition of life teems with mortifications and disappointments to those who pursue the means of finding them; and it is not just that matrimony should bear a reproach which is due to four dispositions alone.

Nor let the cruel fetters bind

A gentle to a savage mind :

Love abhors the sight.

Loose the fierce tyger from the deer ;

For native rage and native fear

Rise and forbid delight.

This cruel scene, too, is exhibited on the stage of life, to the disgrace of human nature. That gentleness should be the prey of ferocity is indeed a reproach to a being that is privileged with reason; but it wants not its examples. Such a conduct suits only brutes; and is not entirely represented by them, since their cruelty extends not to their own species; much less is it exercised towards each other by the different sexes. The males, in particular, are observed to be very tender in their treatment of the females. What pity, that man should need a lesson from a brute! ——— The poet proceeds to tell who are the happy pairs, that wear filken chains for marriage-bands.

*Two kindest souls alone must meet :
 'Tis friendship makes the bondage sweet,
 And feeds their mutual loves.
 Bright Venus in her rolling throne
 Is drawn by gentlest birds alone;
 And Cupids yoke the doves.*

In the preceding image the poet describes blessings which might awake Envy herself. If bliss ever falls to the lot of mortals, the state here described bids the fairest to bestow it, as the most pleasing circumstance of the most pleasing passion. When the pleasures of sense are approved by mental satisfaction, the joy

is complete, and needs only that stability and constant zest of which the transports of human nature are altogether incapable. But if, through the envious machinations of time, the happy pairs afterward fall off from the glow of happiness that smiled on their early spring, it must not be counted a default peculiar to wedlock, but a blemish in the general constitution of nature.

It is this ungrateful reverse that scares away the cautious adventurer from courting the nuptial tie: 'I will not build my hopes on the first flattering scenes of such a state, (he cries) I will take into the account, love grown cold, the cares of a family, and other contingent embargos.' — There is reason in all this; but not reason enough. Every pleasure, as well as love, will have an end; and it would too partial a privilege for this first of delights to boast an exclusive immortality: flights and falls are constant companions. But it is bad policy to reject a pleasure because it will not last for ever, except some singularly dismal scene is seen in the rear; as that were a reason to wish away existence itself. It is, however, prudent to be aware of, and to guard against, such a defection, because disappointment is a mortifying predicament. It is good for men to have so much insight into nature as not to incur the danger of a disagreeable surprize. There are numberless innocent enjoyments to sweeten the cares of life;

life; but we do well ever to bear in our minds the fluctuation that necessarily attends them. Happy are they who preserve their serenity in the midst of storms, and can smile at the little spites of Fortune.

Dr. Young has said, (perhaps not justly,) that bliss 'is a tenor, not a start' A tenor admits not variety, to awake the sleeping senses. There is something tedious and lethargic in such a state; and it is not to be wished that we could discard even the evils of life, on the dear condition of losing its transports with them. There is very little wisdom, or cunning, displayed in endeavours to extirpate those amiable passions which are the sources of pleasure. What does it signify what are the causes of pleasure, provided they be innocent? and where is the advantage of foregoing them, whether they are lasting or not? — When love between the sexes is gone, there may still remain the affection of friends, and some tender pledges to revive and perpetuate the memory of it. The concomitant troubles of every condition grow familiar and vanish, by time, as well as the enjoyments; and the advantages we leave behind by a change of situation are magnified by fancy, in proportion as we retreat from them. If we travel never so far in our speculations, by a necessary revolution, we return to that maxim we left behind us, *that time levels distinctions.* — Nature seems to delight in circles.

We will conclude with a remark on choice in our connexions. — Three principal views in contracting alliances are, beauty, money, and temper : *which* to chuse is the problem. If there are men (for men have the privilege of making the overture) of colder complexion, who can content themselves with the last of these views, sweetness of temper, they have at least little to fear from disappointment. One smile from beauty, it is true, puts all our philosophy to flight ; but the charms of it are too exquisite to delight for ever. Riches, too, grow cheap by possession, and it matters little whether they are a dower on both sides, provided one of the parties is blest with them, to smoothe the road of life. The sweets of temper are permanent : they are riches inexhaustible. But neither riches, nor beauty, nor temper, can subdue an invincible prepossession ; and strong peculiarity of disposition silences general rules. A maggot, they say, is the sweetest bit in a nut. — *Choose which you will, you are liable to repent.* Happiest he who can grasp them all.

CHAPTER



CHAPTER XVII.

REFLEXIONS ON CRUELTY.

*Quam male consuescit, quam se parat ille cruori,
Impius, humano, vituli qui guttura cultro
Rumpit, et immotas præbet mugitibus aures !*

OVID. Met. XV. 463.

IT is related of a certain Persian monarch, who was suspicious of human frailty, that he assigned it as the particular business of one of his officers to remind him every day that he was but a man. A memento of this kind, on the subject of cruelty, as it is continually exercised, is equally seasonable and necessary. However stale the subject, and however trite reflections on it may appear, yet such is its atrocity, and so frequent are the examples of it, to awake the sympathy of nature, that a repeated abhorrence of it, far from disgusting, must soothe and console every breast that is not steeled by brutality or custom. It is a theme that ought to be repeated till the practice of it is lost in precepts.

It may be observed of crimes, in general, against the persons or interests of our brother tenants of the earth, that the great circumstance which constitutes them crimes is the pain, or loss, in some form or other, which they occasion those the offending party has injured. Is one man hurt by another in his person, the harm he receives comes under the notion of pain. Does he suffer by slander and calumny, the injury he sustains is also pain, the mind the seat of it.* Every species of injury that can be named terminates in pain. To be the author of pain to another is to exercise cruelty. Cruelty, in consequence, (without the sophistry of logic) is the essence of crimes; and in proportion as it is cruelty in the highest or lowest degree, it is the greatest or least of crimes.

To inveigh against cruelty to our own species is, we will hope, utterly needless, as that is universally esteemed a crime: for though there have been infernals in the human form, who have taken delight in this most unnatural of all dispositions, yet an abhorrence of it is too general to require a particular censure. But man is not the only creature that came forth from the hands of the universal Parent. The same benign Being that created him, formed also the race of brutes, and endued them with

* *Ἐπεὶ τὴν πόσιν σῶμα, τὸν δὲ νῦν λόγος.*

Anon. ap. Poet. minor.

with sensations of pleasure and pain, as well as man. His care is extended to them equally with the noblest of his works. He has provided them food and clothing, for remedies against cold and want: and the arms he has given them are a tacit indication that they are not made to suffer. It is a more unnatural action to injure a being of our own species, but it is not more cruel, than to harm a brute. The same pain is somewhere sustained, and creation equally groans, be man or beast its subject. It signifies little but to the sufferer who is the sufferer. There is but one Parent of all, and it is immaterial which of his works we violate.

Whether or not Nature designed the brute creation for the food of man, has been an inquiry suggested by tenderness. Every thing considered, it appears more than probable she did, for the following reasons: the practice is universal throughout the whole creation: as animals have no anticipating forethought, the term of their suffering is limited to the moment of losing their life: * and, thirdly, provided needless cruelty be not inflicted, it is not vastly material whether they linger under the conflicts of nature, or speedily lose their existence by

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- * The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.

Essay on Man, ep. 1.

the hand of man. But whether this be the case or not, certainly, after they have clothed us with their wool, and fed us with their milk, it is indeed the act of a heart more than barbarian to aggravate their sufferings with the smallest addition of unnecessary cruelty, when their life is going to be poured forth, to support the life of man. He that can augment their pains when this their last, their greatest, instance of service is at hand, by supplying our wants, and administering to our luxury, even in death,* is a blot in the productions of nature, and a reproach to humanity.

That needless torment inflicted on these poor animals is not rare, every day's observation will inform us. The ministers of slaughter are continually exhibiting scenes of cruelty in the streets. Not content with exercising their despicable power over them, in compliance with the iniquity of the times, they wantonly beat and bruise, teaze and scare them, that a sense of their approaching misery may be awakened, and they *may feel themselves die*, as an imperial monster expressed himself.—Is crime ideal? or is cruelty not a crime? Is man a being of exquisite sensibility, and are brutes but posts? — But we will hope, for the credit of the human race, that

• Quid meruistis, oves, placidum pecus? &c.

Quid meruere boves, animal sine fraude dolisque,
Innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores? &c.

OVID. Metam.

that such wantonness is to be attributed to want of thought, or to a point of curiosity, to observe the effects of their cruelty on the suffering animal. Either motive is at best a lame excuse, and will not diminish one jot of the pain inflicted; but they are both more tolerable than genuine cruelty, for cruelty's sake. Ignorance and inattention are not the worst of pleas for an offence; but they are poor balm for bleeding wounds and sores.

It is worthy of notice, that many, who are scrupulous of their conduct in general respects, are betrayed into this vice, and insensible of the guilt of it, as well as the lawless rabble. Some there are who superstitiously regard the the most slight and insignificant ceremonies of religion, and violate its greatest moral duty, by a breach of the first law of nature, tenderness to the beings around them. This is a true criterion of a narrow soul, which knows no law but that of instinct or custom. Would it be believed, (but whether it be credited, or not, it is equally a truth,) that there have been professors of more than ordinary sanctity, who, when reproached for cruelty to a beast without a cause, have alleged in excuse that the beast was a vermine, and not a Christian? or will it not be thought that the beast which suffered was the better Christian of the two?

Counterfeit goodness has been too much obtruded on the world for real, and supplanted

it. Men have made virtues out of the basest materials, and neglected their truest essence : hypocrisy and cruelty have been known to usurp the seat of sincerity and universal benevolence. It is nothing uncommon to see worthless miscreants make a point of not burning a scrap of paper with the name of God inscribed on it, and erasing from their hearts every law he has engraven there by his finger.

The name of blasphemy raises a horror where acts of atrocious cruelty would not be regarded, though really to blaspheme is almost an impossibility for any one but an idiot. Idle words have been termed blasphemy against a Being that is not capable of suffering, where nothing more than an offence to man could ever be intended by them. The heart of man, is not, cannot be, so vile as to blaspheme. Acquit him of lunacy, and you acquit him of blasphemy. If there be blasphemy, it consists in action. God is passible only in his creatures.

Custom bears down all resistance like a torrent : its influence is unbounded. To custom and a familiarity with cruelty must be attributed the reigning indifference for it : on which account an abhorrence of it should be the lesson of earliest youth. Such a lesson comprizes a more extensive circle of morality than appears to superficial observation. Brutes would not be the only objects of its cheering influence : man would share it in a variety of forms. An abhorrence

rence of cruelty is a firm foundation for numberless virtues, whose connection with it is too remote to be readily seen.

History informs us that cruelty to animals was more than barely censured in Greece. The court of Areopagus expelled one of its members for inhumanly denying shelter in his bosom to a bird that sought an asylum there from the talons of its pursuer — a little circumstance big with sentiment and humanity. Even laws were enacted to punish cruel treatment of them, greatly to the credit of the legislators who composed them. Were it easy to imitate them, and enforce such laws, the example well deserves attention. But I fear the only law of sufficient vigour to work a prevention must be contained in early impressions on minds that are as yet unformed, by a representation of it in all its blackness.

Particular arguments against cruelty are almost an insult on a reader's feelings. The first and greatest argument has its residence in the breast, and needs not the pomp of rhetoric to enforce it, being dictated by the silent voice of Nature. The tender cries of pain are her eloquent dissuaves from cruelty; and he that is insensible to their power deserves not the name of a man. He renounces his privilege of superiority which the exercise of virtue alone can confer, and is himself become a tyger, though he retain the human form.

Many

Many there are who cannot feel the weight of this silent argument. To such must be repeated in words, the injustice, meanness, and atrocity of this vice.

It is unjust, as we have no right to make any being whatever, whether man or beast, unhappy. Beasts, as well as men, while they live, have an indisputable title to that share of felicity which Nature has reached forth to them and tacitly allowed them. To deprive them of this, is to rob them of their due : it is a violation of her law, and an act of injustice that no argument can vindicate. If we can avail ourselves of the superior strength of some of them, in labouring and carrying burdens, the smallest return we can make is to treat them with humanity. We are, in some measure, obliged to them for their labour, and gratitude may be urged as a plea for tenderness in our treatment of them. They are joint-tenants with us of this capacious globe, and have a title to the grais of the field for their support, without incurring a debt to man for food. It is provided for them as much as any of the necessities of life are bestowed on us : it will also grow up spontaneously for their use, without the aid of cultivation. Hence we have no claim at all on them, but are (if I am allowed the expression) in their debt for the services they render us.

Cruelty

Cruelty is mean, because the produce of a narrow mind. Men are cruel where there is an incapacity of returning the injury. To do an injury only because they have power to do it, is a breach of generosity that marks a dastard soul : it is exercising a contemptible tyranny over an inferior which is the reverse of greatness. It argues a weakness to be so intoxicated with a small degree of power, as to betray the little command they have over their passions and actions. To injure a man is unnatural ; to injure a brute is ungenerous. The inability of a brute to foil the superior cunning of man is an additional argument for treating it with tenderness. It is doubly a crime to hurt the innocent and defenceless ; a breach of generosity and of humanity. True magnanimity is never tinged with cruelty, nor can be found in company with it. The most generous and noble-spirited commander is ever the most compassionate to the yielding foe.

Cruelty is an atrocious crime, as (to speak comprehensively) it is the basis of all crimes. The breast that is untinged with cruelty is prepared for every virtue : and the heart that cherishes it is a seat for every vice. There is no violation greater, because there is no injury that is not reducible to it. All that is desirable in life, and worthy our thoughts, is virtue and pleasure ; and all we have to shun is vice and pain. To inflict pain is consequently to thwart
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the business of life, and to defeat the end of existence.

What has been advanced will to some, whose minds are moulded by custom, not refined by sentiment, be regarded as the idle declamation of a school: but every word is registered in the court of Reason. Custom is variable, and has authorized the most flagitious crimes: reason is uniform and ever the same; the patron of substantial virtue, and unmasker of fantastic form.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XVIII.

SCATTERED REMARKS ON THE SCIENCES.

Ὡς περ γὰρ τὴν μέλισσαν ὁρῶμεν ἐφ' ἅπαντα μὲν τὰ
βλαστήματα καθιζάνουσαν, ἀφ' ἑκάστου δὲ τὰ χεῖσιμα
λαμβάνουσαν, οὕτω χρὴ καὶ τὰς παιδείας ὀρεγομένης μη-
δενὸς μὲν ἀπίστω; ἔχειν, πανταχόθεν δὲ τὰ χεῖσιμα συλ-
λεῖναι. ISOCRATES.

THE example of a bee, which does not
confine itself to any one particular flower,
but indiscriminately extracts its honey from
them all, is well applied by one of the most
sensible, and least whimsical, of all the Greek
moralists, to pursuits after knowledge; in which
he recommends variety, in imitation of the
little industrious animal. The advice is by no
means contemptible, as a moderate knowledge
of the sciences in general is more ornamental
and useful than a perfect acquaintance with any
single branch, to the total exclusion of the
rest. Nothing is better calculated to e-
radicate private prejudices than a general view;
nor is any thing more apt to engender them
than a peculiar attachment. Every science
has some excellence to recommend it, but the
mind ought not to be wedded to one alone.

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The study of the MATHEMATICS is a fine field to expatiate in, for the enlargement of ideas. An acquaintance with this science (the astronomic part in particular) resembles a voyage into another world. It furnishes ideas so eccentric from the common circle of understanding, as to impart to a student therein, as it were, a second soul. To vulgar minds the earth we inhabit seems the principal spot on which the Deity has bestowed his care ; and the tenants of it the only beings to whom he has communicated life. The sun and moon appear their lamps alone, and the stars the twinkling ornaments to the dome of their habitation. Astronomy banishes such confined and selfish notions. The mathematician discovers system upon system, and world upon world. With reason for his guide, he naturally concludes that the glittering stars his simple neighbour fondly imagines to belong to this globe of earth, are nothing to us, but that they are the souls and centers of other systems, to give light, and heat, and vegetation, and motion, to animals, and plants, and trees, in other spheres. He measures the distances of the heavenly bodies, and ascertains their magnitudes and revolutions, (which bear a proportion to their distances,) by operations demonstrable to attention, but out of the reach of common apprehension. By the doctrine of parallax (a doctrine that may be conceived by a traveller, who sees hills,

and

and trees, and houses, keep pace with, or recede from, him, as he passes along, according to their different distances) he is informed of the secrets of other worlds. In a word, he has the laws of the celestial choir exposed before him, nor stops his researches till he arrives at the origin of motion in the several systems, the great *arcanum* of astronomy, which, with its wonderful preservation, he in vain stretches his thoughts to account for from mathematical assumptions, and is forced to resolve into the immediate agency of divine power. Every part of this science merits the attention of a philosopher, for its certainty and curious discoveries. It was an ill-judged compliment, both to mathematics and to our nation, paid by Prussia's monarch, when he said he left the science to a *rêve-creux d'Anglois, some empty dreamer of an Englishman*. He little cared for the height of mount St. Catherine* in the moon, because he could not make a rampart of it against the enemy; and as little for the extraordinary stature of an ordinary-sized inhabitant of the planet Jupiter,* discovered by arguments on the pupil of his eye, because he could not procure a regiment of them to send against the Austrians. He keeps himself, he tells his correspondent Voltaire, in the same letter, to the planet he inhabits: he does well, if so it pleases him; and

* See an account of these pretty fancies in Chambers's Dictionary.

and he will do still better if he always supports the rights of his crown with as little destruction to the inhabitants of that planet as possible —

We have seen what progress the mathematician makes in other worlds; now turn we to the reverse of his character, and view how well he acquits himself in this. A mere mathematician is a being, perhaps, one of the most insipid and comic in life. Absorbed in his one study, he flights and neglects every other, as beneath the dignity of his favourite science and his own regard. His conversation is unentertaining and disagreeable; his deportment uncouth and singular. The elegances of life, ever the criterion of taste, are considered by him as gew-gaws, unworthy the attention of one whose views are elevated among the stars. Roughness and peevishness are the clothing of his mind, and an antique garb, which Hipparchus and Ptolemy themselves might have worn, is the covering of his body. How unadvised is excess! how weak and flimsy is man! It has been observed of the great Newton himself, who could not be esteemed a mere mathematician, that he was so bigotted to his favourite science, as to despise lighter amusements. It is well known he expressed a contempt for a contest about a Latin comedy, and a surprise that men of education should make a stir about an *old play*. A later mathematician, far his inferior in genius, and scarcely tinctured with classic lore, was heard to

drop

drop more contemptuous expressions about that study. Mathematics, he said, was the only science worth regarding. As to Latin and Greek, any blockhead might learn them; for that he himself knew a boy that perfectly understood Homer when but eight years old ——— So might any one have understood mathematics at the same age, by help of a peculiar turn of mind; and if our mathematician spoke the truth, it was more than he himself understood at four times the age of the boy in question. — Such prejudices disgrace the acquisitions of men of science. It were better they could condescend to play with children and their toys, than to have contracted such stateliness.

The study of the LANGUAGES comes more within the circle of common life than the mathematics, though it be certainly an inferior pursuit. Learning words, as it has been called, may be looked on as trifling and pedantic, but it has its excellence, as being a good exercise of the ideas, a species of metaphysics, and the foundation of the *Belles Lettres*. No great progress in polite literature can be made without it. The different manner of arranging ideas at different times and in different nations, the variety of dresses they wear in different minds, are a kind of *mental masquerade*, of service in speculation. The more lights we view our subjects in, the clearer are our conceptions of them; the more languages we acquire, the more

more lights we are enabled to view them in. To taste the beauties of fancy, in perfection, in poetical and rhetorical ornaments of writing, a knowledge of language is necessary ; a view which is nearly connected with real taste, and no mean accomplishment to a gentleman. It is likewise worthy observation, that those who are ignorant of every tongue but their own cannot well express themselves in their own. Confined to their native manner, they are excluded from the benefit of choice in words, and in the arrangement and disposition of those words. There are certain energetic modes of expression, certain beauties of sound, and certain transpositions of words, peculiar to every nation, the spirit of which may be sometimes happily transfused into foreign tongues, and add to them grace, power, and an air of novelty, to enliven an attention that is dead to common sounds and vulgar ideas. The principal exception that has been made on this head, is too great a reverence for the *learned languages*, as they are generally called, which have been complimented, together with their authors, as complete standards for modern imitation. It is true they had their Horace and their Cicero, genius and judgement, correctness and elegance, combined, in a few of their writers : but if we take a general view of the ancients, candor will oblige us to confess, that there has been too great a partiality shewn them, since every species

cies of good writing among them can be contrasted with performances at least equally good amongst us, and the arts are in much greater perfection. However, their reverences ought not to be robbed of the praise that is due to undoubted originality, which they may certainly challenge as their right, and that respect which is paid to masters and teachers. A greater share of commendation cannot be given them on account of the original nonsense and unmeaning passages dispersed among their beauties. The principal reason why they may crave our attention is, that they are curious monuments of antiquity, and display a diversity of manners, notions, and thoughts, from what we now experience ; a contrast with which, as it suggests a comparative judgement, exercises and assists the understanding. — We may, it is allowed, read them in English ; but translations greatly strip them of their originality.

MUSIC, though it cannot be said to inform the mind, is an amiable and engaging accomplishment. The influence it has on the soul is a powerful magic charm, with no visible cause for its operation. It is a curious phænomenon, that a sound should tune and harmonize the affections, as the artist does his instrument, which strikingly illustrates the intimate connexion of soul and body, of the organ of hearing and the seat of intelligence. The placid benevolence, the extatic glow, which different notes
inspire,

inspire, extend even to a moral effect, which is more strongly felt by experience, than described by words. Endued with such enchanting powers, no wonder an extraordinary attachment to it has bewitched some of its professors, and robbed them of half their senses. Saul's madness, as we read, was cured by music: madness arising from music has no such cure: more music to a mind diseased with it would resemble the additional administration of wine to one already intoxicated ——— Music may be a great ornament to a man; but many of its professors are no ornament to music: those I mean who chuse for their motto, *Vox et præterea nihil*.

POETRY is another science, or art, which is apt to lead astray, from the paths of common sense and common propriety, those who dedicate too large a portion of time to the muses: Inspiration and madness are esteemed congenial. But, smitten with the excellence of his favourite metaphysics, Locke seems to have shewn himself too great a foe to this harmless pastime, in his remarks on education. If it be allowed that an exclusive attention to it inspires its devotees with wild caprices; metaphysics have done the same. All that was necessary to be observed, is, that extremes are dangerous. Its wanderings apart, we will venture to pronounce it a delicate, agreeable, and liberal accomplishment. For the sake of imitative beauty in morality,

rality, every species of ornament merits cultivation. A mind that is adorned with beautiful, congruous, and harmonious ideas, will, it may be presumed, be best prepared for moral beauty and order. The external ornaments of dress itself, which have a less intimate connexion with mental endowments, are a sort of distant memento to the wearer to consult propriety and decorum in his actions. No decoration of art or science is ill-bestowed to adorn human nature. Like the rich ore, it contains much hidden worth ; but it requires skill and care to cultivate it. It must be purified and refined by sentiment, and stamped into price by virtue. — Dr. Langhorne has an apposite and elegant passage (which has been judiciously selected by the critics) on the subject of poetical follies, warmly inveighing against reflections on those human frailties which are the result of genius : the good-natured reader will review it with pleasure and satisfaction. Speaking of Mr. Collins, an unfortunate poet, he makes the following remarks. ‘ The enthusiasm of poetry, like that of religion, has frequently a powerful influence on the conduct of life ; and either throws it into the retreat of uniform obscurity, or marks it with irregularities that lead to misery and disquiet. The gifts of imagination bring the heaviest task on the vigilance of reason ; and to bear those faculties with unerring rectitude, or invariable propriety,

‘ priety, requires a degree of firmness and of
 ‘ cool attention, which does not always attend
 ‘ the higher gifts of the mind. Yet, difficult
 ‘ as Nature herself seems to have rendered the
 ‘ task of regularity to genius, it is the supreme
 ‘ consolation of *dulness* and of *folly* to point,
 ‘ with Gothic triumph, to those excesses which
 ‘ are the overflowings of faculties they never
 ‘ enjoyed. Perfectly unconscious that they are
 ‘ indebted to their stupidity for the consistency of
 ‘ their conduct, they plume themselves on an
 ‘ imaginary virtue, which has its origin in what
 ‘ is really their disgrace. — Let such, if such
 ‘ dare approach the shrine of COLLINS, with-
 ‘ draw to a respectful distance ; and, should
 ‘ they behold the ruins of genius, or the weak-
 ‘ ness of an exalted mind, let them be taught
 ‘ to lament that Nature has left the noblest of
 ‘ her works imperfect.’ — Were there no
 reason in what the doctor has here advanced,
 the quotation is to be admired for its spirit and
 elegance : but there is likewise a deal of justice
 in his remarks. Nevertheless, since the world
 is, in general, more inclined to censure than
 praise, it is the part of prudence to guard a-
 gainst that intemperance in mental pursuits
 which may expose the student to the hazard of
 a merciless reception, or throw him on a pre-
 carious generosity he may not hope to find.
 We all of us need the advice of a Mentor in our
 turns.

HISTORY and ETHICS, which are collateral branches, the one relating what man is, the other teaching what he ought to be, cannot be said to distort from the paths of propriety, at the same time that they afford much instruction. History promotes the knowledge of human nature in a particular manner, and ethics enlarge the ideas and refine the mind. Under this head, sensible, ingenious novels, which are founded in nature, well deserve to be ranked. They are improvements on common life and common sense, and to the generality more amusing than true history, the author having it in his power to make his characters as various and as entertaining as he pleases, provided he keep to real life, without an impeachment of his judgement. Many novels are justly censured, as turning the brains of weak readers with idle romantic notions, fitted for some fairy land, but not current in that we inhabit: but these are not what I mean. The novels of Le Sage, Fielding, and Smollett, are not liable to this objection: in them the pencil of nature and dictates of prudence are united. — The most ignorant-gossip that lives, one that cannot read, has some share of history and ethics to inform her mind. In her daily converse with her companions she hears lectures of biography and morality, to instruct her in the manners of the world, and reaps some benefit from her intercourse with them, though she has

not the ability of always forming just conclusions. Yet, uninformed as she is, what advantage has she over those who are banished from human society! A wild youth of the woods, could he understand her observations and her stories, would admire her as a prodigy.—Mathematics, and music, and poetry, however agreeable in themselves, may with more propriety be omitted than history and ethics, as less necessary to a man of the world, and more productive of extravagations.

NATURAL HISTORY is a very improving branch of philosophy, which gives a high idea of the works of nature and its author, and deserving of cultivation for its usefulness; but it has been generally deemed a dry study, (to use a common expression,) which men of brilliant parts, of wit, or elegance in taste, are not particularly captivated with. It has a tendency (like the mathematics) to render its devotees singular, dull, and philosophic; which is not admired by the general taste. It is good, in pursuits of so grave a kind, to counteract their influence on the temper by an intermixture of more sprightly and chearful amusements, the enlivening sallies of company and conversation, and the literary productions of wit and humour. An attachment to a favourite study insensibly steals on the student. He is lead away a captive before he is aware that he is even in danger of a surprise.

PHYSIC

PHYSIC and physicians have undergone, from different pens, both praise and censure. Wit and pleasantry have been passed on the science from earliest times,* as if it tended rather to amuse than cure. If we take a middle road in this debate, I am of opinion, we shall not stray widely from the truth, by neither attributing to it a magic power of triumphing over nature and her laws, and rescuing a subject from the arms of death when the stamina of life are wasted and broken, as some have done, nor, with others, denying it to possess any virtue at all. A supposition that it has no efficacy may thus be answered. Are there not drugs which contain properties so strong as to stop the current of life? have not poisons this efficacy? Why then, from the same principles, may we not grant a power in other medicines of assisting nature and healing? I know that it is as much more difficult to cure than kill, as it is to make than to destroy; but difficulty does not imply impossibility. Disorders that are merely local, where a general weakness of the patient is not found, to counteract the physician's endeavours, are particularly a proper subject for physic. A trifling obstruction, or a trifling infirmity, of a very inconsiderable portion of the human system, like a defect in one single tooth in one of the wheels of a watch or clock, may be sufficient to cause a

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general

* ——— Medicus enim nihil aliud est quam animi consolatio. Ap. PETRON.

general stagnation of motion, where the skill of an artist would re-communicate fresh life and vigour to the whole machine. But a proper conduct of the non-naturals (absurdly so called, as my friend Tristram observes) is a point more essential to health, and an improper conduct of them more destructive of it, than any influence derived from medicine. Trees and plants go through the business of vegetation with fewer maladies than man, because they are not endued with *reason*, to lead them astray, or otherwise, because they deviate not from the principles on which they are constructed. They have their diseases, but not in such abundance as the human race. ——— What odium is thrown on the science, is brought on it by the extreme fancifulness of valetudinarians. Every malady they read of, by an attention to system, they are apt to think they themselves labour under; and every remedy they hear of they imagine will work a miracle.

Though the sciences themselves have nothing exceptionable in them, many of the professors of them, by their several follies of intemperance and caprice, have brought a kind of odium and disgrace on them to vulgar minds, which should not, in justice, dishonour the cause of learning. These disadvantages are particularly observed to accrue from an exclusive attention to the conversation of the dead, and a want of general taste. There are coquets in literature.

In

In pursuit of higher endowments, men of letters have been seen to set aside all regard to common propriety, and to acquire particularities in manners and conversation, which expose them to the ridicule of ignorance. This very age has given us an eminent instance of such an unfortunate metamorphosis ; a learned, subtle, and ingenious philosopher, (my reader will easily guess whom I intend,) who has dedicated his life to the acquisition of knowledge, and stored his mind with whims in as great abundance as new sterling ideas ; one who has conducted his readers along the paths of knowledge, and has himself, like the veriest child, needed the tuition of a *gouvernante* in the common affairs of life ; a man who has studied himself into a million of oddities ; fancies the whole world in a plot against him ; shuns human converse, and flies to wilds and mountains ; and, what is worse than all, has acquired, with some, the character of a misanthropist. Such a farrago of knowledge is a greater misfortune to the possessor than the simplicity of nature and primitive ignorance.

Not the manners only, but likewise the look and gestures of a man, are affected by the habit of the mind. The condition of a servant (I do not mean those pampered footmen who are smiled on by their indulgent mistresses) contracts the muscles to humble look and shrinking servility, and chills the genial current of the
K 4
blood.

blood. The young nobleman has a generous and pleasing impudence in his countenance, a gaiety which proclaims no care within, and (till he is wasted by nocturnal revels) a sleek and untarnished face. The miser wears a mask of caution, watches your every motion, and flinks about as if he had a thousand thieves in ambush for his treasure. The peasant presents an uniform dulness, his face inclining to the earth he cultivates : in the one face he has from Nature, (for art lends others a variety,) you see all the simplicity of our forefathers who lived on acorns. The student, amongst the numerous variety of character, has his turn of mind externally expressed, a peculiar badge conferred on him by the Muses, to mark him for their own : gravity in aspect, solemnity of air, extreme confidence or extreme timidity, absence of thought, a load of politeness or none at all, inattention to the *minutiæ* of life and behaviour, great loquacity or total silence, and a singular result of the whole, frequently tinged with some philosophy of dress, an uncouth or slovenly coat, the livery of the Muses.

Were all men philosophers, or were there no such thing as general taste, these foibles would be immaterial. But the scholar is to take notice that he has not the privilege of other culprits when arraigned, a trial by his peers : his judges and jury are composed of *the many*, who make no allowance for scholastic whim, and will not com-
pile

pile a special code of laws to try a particular set of men.

Knowledge is, or ought to be, an ornament ; but if common propriety is the price that is paid for it, it will, by the world, be deemed, at best, but an exchange not worth the trouble of making it. Notwithstanding, it argues a want of judgement to attribute that as a fault to learning which is chargeable only to human weakness ; and none but a simple man will shelter his contempt for erudition under so pitiful a pretext.





CHAPTER XIX.

WORLDLY ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF VIRTUE.

(A LAY SERMON,

The Authorities from heathen Divines.)

—— Μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν ποιήσας, ἔλπιζε λή-
σειν· καὶ γὰρ ἂν τὴς ἄλλης λάθῃς, σεαυτῷ γε συνειδήσεις.

Isoc. ad Demonic.

*Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus : hoc est
Vivere bis, vitâ posse priore frui.*

MART.

THAT self-love is the great spring of hu-
man actions, is an axiom almost too stale
to suffer a repetition. That that self-love is
found to operate in pursuits of pleasure, in the
common idea of that word, is another truth
confirmed by experience. And that one state,
by the influence of time, is not happier than
another, is a third position ; on which, as pro-
per bases, shall be constructed the subject of the
following chapter. On these three world-
ly principles, which come home to the most sor-
didly selfish of human beings, may integrity be
enforced, without recourse to the disregarded
doctrines

doctrines of *duty* and *command*. Fear is the principle that many moralists have endeavoured to work on ; but custom has rendered that motive indifferent.

Though, to a man of the world, it be a hard lesson to learn, to embrace virtue as a Stoic, merely because it is virtue, when it clashes with interest, yet to love it as an Epicurean, for the pleasure it is capable of producing, is no airy notion. It is a motive that has been felt by many noble minds, and may be the reward of others, who will be at some small pains, with the assistance of reflection, to acquire that amiable disposition.

Worldly happiness may be fairly pleaded in the cause of virtue ; and that is a consideration that should be of force with a villain. The reflexion of innocence throws a pleasing shade on every scene. The acquisition of wealth and other courted objects is by no means followed by so great felicity as the gripping fancy imagines, even when procured by honourable methods ; much less can it command satisfaction when it is the fruit of dishonesty. Those overweening notions are engendered by prejudice, which experience and a general survey will banish. When the high opinion a knave has conceived of riches begins to abate, by that satiety which is the concomitant of possession, he will have calmness of mind and leisure to pon-

der on the means whereby he has amassed them.*
Under such a situation integrity has charms
more sterling than gold.

The definition of a man of honour, given
by a writer who had a fine taste for moral
beauty, shall serve as the touchstone for up-
rightness; and he that can stand that test has
reason to congratulate himself on his character.
' Were it in the power of a good man, says my
' author, with only a snap of his finger, to in-
' trude his name into the testament of a dying
' rich man, to the exclusion of his lawful
' heir, he would abhor the deed, though assured
' no mortal could discover it.'†

The compact of society, the engagement we
all virtually enter into when we profess ourselves
members of the community, is equally binding,
whether a violation of it can be known or not.
This criterion of an honest man, that he pre-
serves his integrity when out of the reach of ob-
servation, does honour to him that can claim
it, and no one is strictly so who is not distin-
guished by it. It is a generous and amiable
qualification, which is never found but in com-
pany with greatness of soul. In such a man
there

- *Magne Pater divum, sævos punire tyrannos*
Haud alia ratione velis, cum dira libido
Noverit ingenium, ferventi tincta veneno,
Virtutem ut videant, intabescantque relictæ.

PERSIUS, sat. ii.

† Cic. Off. 3.

there is a satisfaction unknown to the fraudulent, unjust, and oppressive part of the world, who wallow in wealth which is the purchase of their crimes, and cannot taste the pleasures of innocence. To merit felicity, to a delicate mind, is, in fact, to enjoy it.*

That we are guilty of no act of injustice through fear of the laws, or dread of reproach, is a mean consideration, very low in the scale of virtues: yet the major part of mankind are wrought on by no nobler motive. The pride of virtue is at a loss whether to censure the ignoble minds which answer such a description as this, or to look down on them with pity or contempt. They are certainly not to be envied. Human merit is, at best, but a pitiful commodity; but they cannot veil themselves with even the shadow of it: and pain and uneasiness must accompany a conduct which is but the offspring of constraint.

What a pleasing circumstance, what a genuine joy, exceeding what a corrupt mind will count a joy, must have attended the compliment paid to that Grecian, who had acquired such confidence among his fellow-citizens by his uniform and unshaken integrity, as to have the keys of the city entrusted to his honour, without the usual demand of an oath, to secure his fidelity! He might have had a more
lucrative,

* *Est enim demum vera felicitas felicitate dignum videri. PLIN. paneg.*

lucrative, he could not have a more exquisite, reward. The consideration of such a requital is generally looked on as romantic, but it is actually glorious. The sacrifice of vicious inclination is much more noble than libations of blood at the altar of Bellona, which have purchased, too cheaply, wreaths of laurel, to adorn the head of many a victor. The reward of virtue is too often adjudged to the patrons of vice, to the detriment of virtue's cause.

This reward lies more particularly within the reach of persons in eminent stations and employments. If men act for rewards, they have the fairest opportunities of enjoying them under the most delicious forms. The smallest services of a great man to a state are received with such expressions of honour and respect as millions of annual income will not procure. Expressions of homage are a principal object of riches, and the upright statesman has them in abundance, his elevated station placing him in the most conspicuous view. When Sir Robert Walpole asserted that every one has his price, he uttered a truth ; and the question is, in what that price should consist : a more valuable bribe exists not than the external applauses of a nation, and the internal approbation of the heart. Extreme poverty has warped a stubborn integrity from noble resolutions, by a conflict which calls forth the tears of humanity : it has incited to actions, for which the agent
condemned

condemned himself whilst he yielded up his consent : but that is not the case with the great. Supposing that, by fraud and peculation, a minister can increase his income of ten thousand a year to twenty or thirty thousand, is the surplus an equivalent for loss of integrity ? — He will be more respected with five thousands a year, and a reputation un sullied, than with ten times that income, and loss of his honour. The name of a Chesterfield carries renown into retreat. — But corrupt ministers know how to smile at scholastic notions, and to stop the mouth of the pedant scribbler with a dinner.

If there are minds which cannot take delight in the applauses of consciousness, they are tarnished and corrupt : that confession does little honour to him that makes it. Reflexions on this head may to some be hateful as death ; but they will be so to those only whose virtue is at the lowest ebb.

General depravity doubtless occasions a greater indifference for the cause of virtue, by a discouraging scene of corruption, than would otherwise have subsisted. Men are greatly animated by example, as we see in instances of fortitude, whose influence is a perfect contagion : they would be virtuous where they are not, were virtue smiled on by public countenance. In their present situation they are of opinion they may as well go down with the common stream, as approve themselves the faultless monsters

monsters of nature. But this peevishness is a moral disease, not to be admired or indulged : there is the greater opportunity of winning the prize of glory when there are but few competitors, than when a whole multitude contend for it. There have been heroes in vice, who have plumed themselves on unexampled acts of villany ; why should there not be heroes in a more noble cause ? Were real virtue in due estimation, were the exercise of it properly encouraged, the possession of it would not be superseded by sordid considerations : duty and delight would center in one. That is to probe the wound to the bottom. Where merit is duly rewarded, God is worshipped in his works.

From a cursory survey of the moral world, with a moderate share of good-nature for our guide, did not experience evince the contrary, one would be led to imagine that few among us, who are not apparently under the influence of very cogent and extraordinary impulses, could coolly and deliberately be guilty of a flagrant breach of justice or humanity. If things are seen as they are ; if virtue and vice are placed in a true and conspicuous light, and men of delicate feelings are set up for judges, the former has so much the advantage, as must attach them to her cause.

The picture of moral beauty is finely drawn by the prince of eloquence. ‘ No animal beside
 ‘ man (says that elegant writer) is charmed
 ‘ with the beauty, grace, and harmony of ma-
 ‘ terial

' terial objects. A representation of which,
 ' being transplanted from the eyes of the body
 ' to those of the mind, constitutes a higher taste
 ' for moral beauty, grace, and harmony, and
 ' forbids a violation of them in deed or intention.
 ' The result of this forms that Virtue which
 ' is in question ; which is intrinsically noble,
 ' though it were not ennobled, and commend-
 ' able, though by none commended. You see,
 ' as it were, a resemblance of this beauty : but
 ' could it be gazed on by the eyes of flesh, it
 ' would, as Plato says, excite wondrous love
 ' for wisdom.' *

This idea of the beauty of virtue is not al-
 together chimerical ; we have a resemblance of
 it

* ——— Itaque eorum ipsorum, quæ aspectu
 sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal [præter hominem]
 pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam par-
 tium, sentit. Quam similitudinem natura ratioque
 ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam ma-
 gis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem, in con-
 siliis factisque conservandum putat, cavetque ne
 quid indecore effœminateve faciat ; tum in omni-
 bus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinosè aut
 faciat aut cogitet. Quibus ex rebus conflatur et ef-
 ficitur id, quod quærimus, honestum : quod eti-
 amsi nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit ; quod-
 que vere dicemus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, lauda-
 bile esse natura. Formam quidem ipsam ——— et
 tanquam faciem honesti vides ; quæ, si oculis cer-
 neretur, mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret
 sapientiæ. De Officiis, lib. i.

it in the amiable appearance of infants. In them we behold, as it were, innocence imperfected and visible to our external sight. They shew us gestures and looks full of the harmless simplicity of nature, untinged with the fraud and baseness which sordid interest and villanous design have dispersed through the world. In their countenances no cruelty and murders are pictured, no baseness and guile, to surprise unwariness. What nature simply rehearses they repeat, nor dress her dictates in the disguise of art. In such a view the most abandoned wretch must find a pleasure. Virtue and innocence ever wear the fairest form : all the sophistry of villany, and self-persuasion used by a knave to smother and stifle his feelings, cannot so far blind him, as that he shall be unable to see their beauty in others. There are seeds of virtue in every human breast, sown there by the Author of existence, which will display themselves when wayward interest does not check them.

I have chosen the rather to insist on the pleasure of virtue, as that carries more conviction with it than the rigour of duty. Epicurus has more disciples than Zeno. Pleasure is the grand movement of all our actions ; every thing we do is reducible to that one general spring. And if it be urged that what we think a pleasure is a pleasure, whether it be laudable or not, it may with truth be replied, that virtue is capable of yielding that pleasure, as there have

have been many examples of it. It appears a Herculean task to shake off vicious habits ; but a little resolution and labour will effect great and unhopèd for changes in temper and inclination :* and, when once good habits are adopted, the way, that before seemed rigid and thorny, becomes easy and familiar. By custom men have rolled naked in burning sands and in snow, without shrinking from the pain. By custom the wives of Indians have been animated to throw themselves into the flaming pile of their deceased husbands without revolting at the ideas of tortures and death. The same custom would avail in a nobler cause. Men have been exalted into gods ; and men have sunk into brutes and devils. The philosophy of Newton is as true of the moral, as it is of the natural, world : the tempers of men are as differently modified as the atoms of matter. — If we love virtue as far as it is agreeable, we shall love it as we ought, provided only we make it as agreeable as possible.

Though

- * Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit,
Si modo culturæ patientem commodet aurem.

HOR. lib. i. epist. 1.

Τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροισιν ἔθηκαν
Ἀθάνατοι, μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄργιστος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν
Καὶ τευχὺς τοξεῶτον· ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται
Ῥηϊδίῃ δ' ἤπειτα πέλει, χαλεπὴ περ εἴσα.

HESIOD. Op. et D. lib. i.

Though the delicacy of men, in general, does not rise so high, as that a consciousness of honour will procure them satisfaction, if they reap not the fruits of external approbation, yet prudence will suggest to them how hazardous a step they take when they trust to the uncertainty of concealment. If sagacity be adopted by one party to hide a base action, the same sagacity will assist another in finding it out. The object of fame is missed. Very few, I am inclined to think, gain the reputation of virtue when they have it not. Mens characters are generally known: and the world are always more disposed to find out faults than perfections; darkness, by the enchantments of envy, being more visible than light. The knave may spread the veil of night over his actions, and assume the mask of sanctity;

————— *Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes*
Intendunt oculos. —————

The most artful dissimulation will not always and every where avail. Internal and external punishment seldom fails to follow the detested deed when the dictates of the heart are rebelliously slighted. The baser passions will, when they subside, give way to Reason, who will be heard in some succeeding calm. Though her voice be gentle and mild, it is distinct and commanding, and will, like a nightly vision, attend

tend the villain in his slumbers, and haunt him in his bed. The stings of remorse are not to be despised.* And shame and infamy will add weight to its stripes.

That a man has no conscience at all in his actions; that, by a continued career in the paths of villany, he is become so callous and deaf to its reproaches, as to have lost the pain that accompanies sensibility; may by some be thought a valuable acquisition: but insensibility alone can pronounce such a sentence: nature and reason, our faithful monitors, combine to reverse it. We may ask, with a sensible prelate, ‘Is a man who sleeps on a precipice in less danger because he sleeps?’ — Insensibility is no desirable accomplishment; it will only render a man more contemptible in the eyes of others, who are more expert in unmasking their neighbours vices than they are in discovering their own.

If we view Virtue as fatalists, (for I will allow the advocates for vice no hole to creep out at,) she is the same charming object, the only fair mistress of the mind: mental reproach is what the rankest fatalist cannot escape when he offends:

* *Nolite enim putare, P. C. ut in scena videtis, homines consccleratos impulsu deorum terri furiarum tædis ardentibus: sua quemque fraus, suum facinus, suum scelus, sua audacia, de sanitate ac mente deturbat. Hæ sunt impiorum furia, hæ flammæ, hæ faces. Cic. orat. in Pis.*

offends : the reproof of the heart is the justice and philosophy of nature. If we view her as the advocates of freedom, she can plead merit as well as satisfaction. If we view her with the eye of religion, we embrace her as recommended by silent commands from heaven. Behold her as we will, she can ever plead general utility. Her cause is the cause of all. We should join to fight for her as we would in defence of our city when besieged by the enemy. She is the Palladium of the general good.

But stop, fond moralist, and unbend your brow. — By virtue is here intended, chearful, smiling virtue ; not Stoical insensibility, nor monkish severity. I have never yet been able to discover the merit of self-denial in innocent wants, or the great reason to boast of not obeying the voice of Nature, which she utters to all : of making virtues of celibacy, fasting, and mortification. Why to snatch from another the blessings of life should be esteemed a violation, and to snatch them from ourselves should be counted a virtue, I cannot divine. Sectaries never more disgrace their several causes than when they insist on trifles for virtues. Good sense the most valuable ideal, and good-nature the most amiable moral, philosophy, are more beneficial to the world than all the pomp of system : and neither good sense, nor good-nature, will patronize needless severity.

Virtue

Virtue should not be pictured like a fury, with snakes for her hair, and a Gorgon's head. Were she presented in her native charms, men might court her as the mistress of their hearts, who captivates powerfully, because she captivates pleasantly. There are evils in life (I again repeat it) sufficient for the most greedy searcher after them ; and it is not requisite that more be added to the number.

Pleasure, as pleasure, is not to be condemned; but only guilty pleasure: such as injures another is unjust ; such as hurts ourselves is imprudent. When there is no reason to be alleged against a pleasure, there is always one for it — *T'enjoy is to obey*, and the only foundation for gratitude. Is it consonant with reason, or is it consistent with equity, that morality should enjoin it as a duty to heap worldly felicity on others, and bid us deny it to ourselves? This is a method of scaling heaven as ridiculous as that of the monks, who endeavoured to purchase it by flagellation ; and a second wild attempt to heap mount Ossa on Pelion, in order to reach it. Needlessly to punish in one moment of duration, to reward in another, is simple œconomy.

Pleasure and virtue are the duties of life, and the objects of existence : virtue for the benefit of others, and pleasure for our own. The profusion of nature is lost where not enjoyed ; and prudence is the standard of that enjoyment. When licentiousness is dissuaded by reason, its arguments are in the cogent forms of injustice,

injustice, disease, want, misery, and death. The most durable fruition of pleasure is that which is regulated by moderation; for if evils are the fruit of gratification, we cannot be said to enjoy.

Unmeaning precepts have been a great cause for slighting those which are actually beneficial. When men find false alarms, with the shepherd in the fable, they are apt to suspect every outcry: and where monkeys are mistaken for men, men may be mistaken for monkeys.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XX.

WHETHER EXTRAORDINARY MENTAL
ACQUISITIONS BE CONDUCTIVE TO VIRTUE.

Etiam illud adjungo, sæpius ad laudem atque virtutem naturam sine doctrina, quam sine natura valuisse doctrinam. Cic. pro Archia poet.

HOW far learning has contributed to the cause of virtue ; whether it has at all contributed to it ; or whether it has not, in many instances, been even prejudicial to it ; are questions that have been started, time immemorial, and which are left undecided. To add to the number of the disputants who have entered the lists in this controversy, may, by some, be thought an unnecessary addition to the general confusion of opinions ; but as what will be hereafter observed will not be professedly and absolutely in support of any of these opinions, instead of increasing party-rage, it may, perhaps, prove my good fortune to be considered in the light of a mediator.

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In this dispute, as well as in most others, the antagonists on either side the question advance more than truth will warrant, through their zeal to approve the justice of their opinions. Among the panegyrist of learning, especially, the greater part are blinded by the secret love they themselves bear to it, from an experience of the benefits of improvement they have derived from it. Of all the passions in the world there is not a more regular or constant one than the passion for study, in those who have chanced to incline that serious way. The passion of love, (which is perhaps the wildest in human nature) however strong under the particular circumstances that at first gives it birth, by a change in the age or situation of the lover, is often entirely lost and forgotten; and, with respect to this affection of the mind, a man is, as Sir Thomas Browne in general observes, a different person in the different stages of life. But the calmer amusements of learning are of such a nature as equally to engage the vivacity of youth and the severity of age. It is not, then, surprising, that a pursuit, which has universally obtained, should have so dazzled the eyes of its friends, as to have rendered them blind to every evil it might introduce, and to have fixed them unshaken advocates in its cause. The partizans on the side of learning, being men of learning, are *ipso facto* enlisted under its banner, and defend but their own province

vince by their vindication of it. All that they advance may possibly come from the heart; but they must, by the very nature of their circumstances, be prejudiced in its favour. Nor is this humour confined to men of learning: we are all of us partial to our predominant amusement.

The assertors of the opposite opinion are of the unlettered sort, and (it is obvious to suppose) influenced in their sentiments by observing the want of principle and honour in many who have shone in the literary world. They have seen, too often, a great understanding, and a corrupt heart, united in the same person; and have thence, naturally enough, concluded, that they are but casually connected. Upon an impartial examination, we must admit the position on which they build as founded in fact. To go no farther back, the name of Bacon is unquestionably great in the republic of letters; he was, as it were, the dawn of philosophy and science; but silence is the best friend to the fame of his virtues: his understanding was indeed comprehensive, but his inglorious connivance at corruption in some measure justified the poet when he call'd him, 'The greatest and the meanest of mankind.'*

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* I may be censured by some, as Pope has been before me, for bearing so hard on this ornament of philosophy, as to have quoted him for an example of

We have, within our memory, another very singular, and somewhat different, instance, to prove that the acquisition of learning has been no impregnable fence against the basest villany. Eugene Aram, the schoolmaster of Knareborough, was a man of uncommon learning; he was a proficient in natural philosophy and the mathematics; was master of the ancient and modern languages; and had compiled part of a Celtic dictionary, which, but for his crimes, he might have lived to finish, for the benefit of the learned. Adorned with these

mental
of vice; but really corruption in a judge (which he afterwards confessed, with shame, that he was consenting to) is a very capital fault. He significantly expressed the occasion of his disgrace, when he said to his vicious dependants, (whose corruptions he winked at,) when they respectfully rose from their chairs on his entrance into the room where they were sitting, 'Sit still, my masters; your rising has been the cause of my fall.' — It is urged in his favour, that his connivance was rather the result of carelessness and inattention, than of evil design; a plea that alleviates the offence, but not excuses it. There are faults and crimes of omission, as well as of commission. And if we, as moralists, after the example of K. James, make allowances for his frailties, in consideration of his mental endowments, and remit of our severities towards him, we cannot do so as casuists in this contest: for if learning was the cause of this irregularity of conduct, it would be an absurdity to attribute the effect to any thing else.

mental accomplishments, would any one have imagined that he could have been an accomplice, deliberately, for the sake of money, in a most treacherous murder? — He was. Houseman and he, in the year 1745, persuaded one Daniel Clarke to borrow valuable effects, to a considerable amount, on false pretences; and when he had them in his possession, and was proceeding on his way, these perfidious villains set on him, killed him, buried his body in a cave, called St. Roberts's cave, and seized the booty. — By circumstantial evidence, gathered from words inadvertently dropped by Houseman, they were both sentenced to die in 1759. He composed a subtle defence, insinuating the danger of circumstantial evidence, but to no purpose, as the presumption was too strong against him; and when he knew his doom, he wrote a treatise in defence of suicide, and tried to bleed to death; but the executioner anticipating his endeavours, he fell an extraordinary victim to the laws of his country. — Such a villain as this would bring disgrace on any society, or communion, or science, of which he was a member or professor; but may we not conjecture that, by his immoderate study, he had contracted a species of insanity? for how shall madness be defined, and by what is it bounded? True he reflected dishonour on learning; but he is a rare example of so nefarious

a crime in a scholar, and he must from nature have inherited an exceedingly vicious heart.

On the characters of such men, as are above-mentioned, are reflections against learning founded by the common sort : but it is inconclusive to draw inferences from individuals to the detriment of knowledge, when those individuals may so easily be contrasted, in the learned world, with characters distinguished for virtue. The respectable names of Boyle and Newton are as great ornaments to the cause of virtue as the others were the contrary. Their lives were unvaried scenes of innocence and purity ; their actions were as amiable as their knowledge was extensive. So that, if we rest on these single examples, (as more on either side might be named,) by the very laws of arithmetic, objections drop, and are silenced. It is indeed highly probable, that the principles of these men, who have been cited as general representatives, might have resulted from a combination of circumstances ; which is generally the case. Historians (who are sometimes given to slander and innuendo) say, that Bacon was a statesman ; that he lived within the contagion of a court : but they merit rebuke for saucily reflecting on their superiors.

In making a proper estimate, it must likewise be considered, that the world, in settling the merits of this question, are apt to direct their views to eminent objects, to geniuses in learning :

learning : we ourselves have done the same. But geniuses are noted for their irregularities ; like comets, they move in eccentric orbits, and are as likely to wander in the paths of vice, as to be found in the regions of heroic virtue. When a wheel has lost its situation on the axis, it is not known what direction it will take. It flies off in a tangent, the inclination of which is purely casual.

While we deal thus in retale, we are over-matched by Justin the historian, who has dealt his examples more plentifully, and drawn his conclusion from the character of a whole nation. He seems to have been possessed with a great opinion of the virtue of the uninformed Scythians of his time, when, speaking of them, he observes, that ‘ it is worthy of remark that ‘ they possessed by nature, and ignorance of ‘ vice, good qualities which all the learning ‘ and wisdom of Greece did not produce ; and ‘ that a comparison between them redounded to ‘ the discredit of the latter.’ * Granting this ancient the credit of a well-informed historian, it must be considered as a moral phenomenon

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* Admirabile videatur hoc illis [Scythis] naturam dare, quod Græci longa sapientium doctrina præceptisque philosophorum consequi nequeunt, cultosque mores incultæ barbariæ collatione superari. Tanto plus in illis proficit vitiorum ignorantio, quam in his cognitio virtutis. — Lib. ii. cap. 3.

nomenon that a race of barbarians, as the Scythians were, should approve themselves the prodigies of virtue he has represented them to be, and must have arisen from other circumstances in conjunction with their ignorance ; and, till he could evince that education would have introduced vice amongst them, and banished their virtues, what he has advanced in favour of ignorance will not amount to a proof, when we find his representation of them so dissimilar to the accounts that are given of most other uncultivated nations. But these marvellous people exist no more, and we must number them with the apocrypha.

Upon the nicest examination, I am of opinion, we shall find that, upon the whole, learning has not injured the cause of virtue, nor so greatly served it as a good man might have wished and expected. It is to be regarded rather in the light of physic than in any other, in which universal nostrums are derided by the most intelligent practitioners. What medicines might prove serviceable under a relaxation of the solids would be prejudicial in a constipation : what may cure the tooth-ache would not cure the palsy : and what may correct the constitution of one man, may be useless, or prejudicial, to that of another. There are peculiarities in the construction and state of different bodies which call for different methods of treatment : there are obstructions physic
may

may remove, and there are situations in which it might be noxious. Changes may be wrought by its influence, but miracles are not to be expected from it. The notion of a panacea is idle and romantic, and nature is often stubborn, perverse, and refractory. Such is the case of the human body, and similar to it is that of the mind. There are certain habits of vice, certain natural evil propensities, which mental reflexion may, and often does, correct. A more than ordinary share of some luxurious and noxious passions is, in general, a promising object for the exercise of reason, and seems to bespeak success. We have seen the happy effects of it in several fundamental points of morality, and will content ourselves with one very striking example of it. Cruelty is a vice to which the illiterate vulgar are greatly addicted, as we may observe in their treatment of animals, those particularly which are marked for the victims of slaughter. But it is observable, that men of letters (some to superstition) are particularly cautious how they violate one of the most positive precepts of humanity. And if this were the only lesson enforced by study, (which it really is not) it would deserve to be supported for the sake of so amiable a disposition. It is a business befitting a God to communicate happiness to, and ward off misery from, the beings he has created.

By a misapplication of knowledge, which has redounded to its discredit, there have been men who, instead of correcting a small natural bias in favour of vice, have acquired, by education, greater boldness and intrepidity in their vicious career; tinctured by that sophistry which would subvert the fundamental principles of morality, in representing the distinctions of virtue and vice as mere scholastic inventions, as vague and uncertain phantoms, calculated only to amuse the weakness of those who regard them. A complete knave, it is said, must have abilities. What a pity that such men should ever have disgraced the exercise of reason, and have obliged us to confess that the cultivation of the mind may, with some, be followed by greater ills than the simplicity of ignorance would ever have produced!

A principal evil immoderate study has certainly given rise to, is, an inattention in many men of learning to social and domestic duties, which are ingredients necessary for the happiness of others, though they did not esteem them essential to their own. The tempers of some have been rendered so sower and indifferent, as to make them insensible to the calls of Nature,* the

* The celebrated Pascal, it is said, had acquired the disagreeable habit of indifference here animadverted on; which he displayed in an unkind disregard of his sister. The reason assigned for it was, that he disapproved of doating on, or attaching

the tender ties of paternal and conjugal affection, and the grateful communications of friendship; as if it were the business of life, and the intent of existence, that habits acquired should erase the ground-plot of Nature, contravene her endeavours, and disconcert her plans. But I will no longer hold up to view the unfavourable side of the picture, which resembles not the good-natured and judicious patron of learning, lest I should seem, contrary to my inclination, to have approved myself its foe; but will, in vindication of it, take notice, that the race of cynics, by that spirit of freedom, good-sense, and familiarity, which daily gain ground, is constantly on the decline; and that such is my good opinion of mankind, that if moral philosophy and nature go hand in hand, we shall have no cause to wish the absence of the former.

By my idea of knowledge, through this whole chapter, I would be interpreted to mean a distinguished share of it. Some knowledge and exercise of reason is necessary to make a difference between men and brutes; and the question intended is, whether more than ordinary acquisitions of it are entitled to the encomiums or censure bestowed by different opinions. By my idea of the moral philosophy

L 6

ing himself to, any thing worldly. — *La belle pensée!* A most excellent consideration this! proving, to satisfaction, that prodigies of learning and genius are not always prodigies of common sense.

sophy I admire, I would be understood to mean only that philosophy which has common sense, the best foundation for such knowledge, for its basis; but a small portion of which has gone to the composition of many systems which have been promulgated at different periods of time: and sure I am, that, had the ridiculous and unamiable persons, who are exhibited as patterns of vice and irregularity by historians, possessed a moderate share of this useful qualification, they never would have been the perpetrators of many of those extravagant and villanous actions which have coloured the features of character in the annals of mankind.

What has been observed in the foregoing chapter, as it favours the cause of learning, will, with its friends, suffer a repetition. Supposing a man, by attention to moral study, has acquired the highest sense of virtue, and a resolution to follow its dictates, he is in some measure obstructed in the extraordinary exertion of it, by having a world of knaves, less disposed to favour its cause, to combat with. If he does not partly coincide with common customs, he is bereft of his share of the comforts of life. To enjoy an equality with others, he is constrained so far to act in concert with them, as not to exhibit himself a prodigy of disinterestedness. This is one of the consequences of Fortune's blindness, who has as much mischief to answer for as the devil himself,

self, however she may complain, in the fable, of the unjust accusations that are pronounced against her.

The concession of the almost indifferent tendency of extraordinary knowledge, in general, may furnish an objection against the exercise of the mind, as useless labour. But a distinction is here to be made. There are good, and there are bad reasonings, false and true. In ranging the garden of knowledge men bring home weeds as well as flowers; which is not the case with skilful botanists: and it does not follow from their making no difference between good and bad, that there is really no distinction. Blindness and perverseness are no proofs of the non-existence of light and rectitude. And if an incorrigibly bad disposition loses its timidity by sophistical conclusions, a well-meaning erroneous one will be corrected,* and a good one will certainly be confirmed, by candid reflection, and attention to just and sensible argumentation.

• Τὸ γὰρ ἀποσῆναι χαλεπὸν

Φύσιος ἢ ἔχει τις αἰ.

Καὶ τοὶ πολλοὶ ταῦτ' ἔπαθεν

Ζυγίης γνόμαις ἰτίων,

Μελεβάλλοιτο τὸς τέρας.

ARISTOPH. Vespæ.

CHAPTER



CHAPTER XXI.

ON HAUGHTINESS.

Sequi enim gloria, non appeti, debet : nec, si casu aliquo non sequatur, idcirco, quia gloriam non meruit, minus pulchrum est. PLIN. epist. lib. i. ep. 8.

THE foundation of discontent in many situations of life, is, a comparison in the mind of the humble station of one with the exalted condition of another. This is its original source, which, in the present constitution of affairs, admits not a remedy. Not so the aggravating cause of this discontent, the pains which proud superiors take to make their inferiors more sensible of their inferiority. That is an evil which lies at the door of individuals, and claims their redress, by smoothing the inequalities of Fortune.

If we view the subject with a philosophic eye, there is abundant reason for caution against arrogance, in the slightness of that casualty which has unmeritedly given to many a distinguished share in the possessions and blessings of life. By the natural right of mankind, no
one

one can claim a more than equal portion with others. No such partiality exists in a state of nature : the laws of society alone can confer the distinction. Let the supercilious man weigh this accidental difference, this paper-wall between his title to what he possesses and the pretensions of his poor dependant, and he will find cause to stifle his pride and check his contumely.

By the constitutions of state, and general consent, the point of right is fixed and certain. By many, property has been acquired by industry and toil. We all agree to preserve this right ; and, in return, expect the protection of the general body to confirm to us what has fallen to our several shares. As members of society, we are under an obligation, virtually equivalent to an oath, not to violate the rules of this dispensation ; and an infringement of them is pronounced equally criminal with a transgression of natural obligation.

Such are the different views of human affairs, under the different constitutions of Nature and society. Notwithstanding this change, by universal concurrence introduced, it can never be deemed the part of a generous mind so far to stretch an accidental advantage, as wantonly to be the author of unmerited pain to another. In conferring a distinction on individuals, society never intended to bestow a liberty of displaying haughtiness and insolence. Though
subordination

subordination is an established law of society, and though the different endeavours of different men are marked by distinctions in the favours of Fortune, it betrays a want of generosity, and the impotence of a little mind, in a person of elevated station, to triumph over the inferiority of others, as over the arrogance of a defeated foe.

That subordination requires and implies distinction is without dispute. State and pomp are properly connected with magistracy and authority, as mechanical engines for lifting them above the encroachments and impertinence of the unmannered vulgar. Little minds need such instruments of awe; and the lower order of people, particularly of this kingdom, will run riot, even in the presence of dignity and splendor. The more civilized themselves are struck with the pageantry they behold, and derive from it additional reverence. And where integrity is joined to greatness, these honours are, in every respect, well conferred.

In the private concerns of great men the case is in some measure reversed. It is not absolutely necessary to transfer all that stateliness to their own particular intercourse with their inferiors. It may appear paradoxical, but it is literally true, that fewer airs will serve the turn of a nobleman, in private life, than need be assumed by a mechanic. His rank alone will extort the respect which is paid him, and there

there is little danger of an encroachment on his due. The mechanic, on the other hand, feels himself under the necessity of adopting some appearances of consequence, or he would dwindle into nothing, and become a cypher in the world.

Condescension, when found in company with greatness, instead of diminishing aught from the latter, gives to it an accession of lustre. Nothing more exalts than humility. This is another paradox, founded in truth, and worthy attention. Affability in a nobleman will purchase him more esteem than his coronet, and not take a jot from his dignity. Respect is more chearfully paid to a humble man than it is to the proud. *Oderint dum metuant*, was the saying of a haughty emperor; but it is a maxim that will never be admired by him that is studious of real honour.

Prudence suggests the advantages resulting from condescension. The affected respect which is paid to stately distance is neither so sterling nor so glorious as that which is the fruit of humility. Though the laws restrain the sallies of insolence and insult towards persons of rank from their inferiors, no law on earth can produce that genuine reverence which comes from the heart. Chains, that bow down the body, are no fetters for the mind, and till that is subdued the triumph is incomplete. This is only a consequence of the moderation with which
a great

a great man bears his exalted station, and the sole honour that redounds to the man, the common homage being yielded only to his rank, and not belonging to his person:

*Nam genus, et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco.* —————

There is double glory in enjoying a blessing which is the produce of our own endeavours or merit; and it is not known, till a man is invested with honour, whether he deserves it. If there be an insuperable desire of admiration, let the object of it be properly fixed, and the virtues of good-nature, integrity, and condescension, be signalized in quest of it.

The old observation, that insolence is a foible peculiar to upstarts,* is an inducement that naturally leads to explode it. Those who have been a long time great, or can count a numerous train of illustrious ancestry, are habituated to grandeur; it sits easily on them, and they are not possessed with the notion of it, as if it were new to them. Pride should consider this as a mortifying and discouraging reflection. The observation seldom fails of being quoted, when occasion prompts, and the application of it is familiar to the lowest capacity;

————— *Ex insolentia, quibus nova bona fortuna sit, impotentes lætitia insanire.* Liv. dec. 3. l. 10.

city, the maxim is so universally propagated. But the same pride that fills a man with an opinion of his own consequence, rarely deigns to listen to the promised advantages of condescension.

Vanity and haughtiness are different, though they spring from the same source. The one is at most but a folly, whilst the other may be construed into a vice. The sallies of the former will excite only a smile, where the exertion of the latter will wound sensibility. Vanity is an involuntary giddiness of the mind, which every one has not firmness sufficient to guard against; haughtiness is an insolent effort of that vanity, which ripens into action. Vanity will allow another his due; haughtiness is solely occupied in erecting its own consequence on the ruins of others.

That pride is an indication of a narrow soul, is confirmed by the same argument that has been used on the subject of revenge. Those minds which honest Juvenal has noticed as most addicted to the latter passion, and which he has, without ceremony, called *little minds*, are likewise most prone to pride. The learned reader will know whom I mean if he remembers the thirteenth satire of that author, which is one of his finest, if not his finest; and if he does not, I will not tell him. —

Where the judgement is weak, the affections
of

of the mind are strong. The weakest eyes are most dazzled by the splendor of the sun : the weakest minds are most intoxicated by pomp and pageantry. But if we cannot help thinking too highly of our dignity, it is impolitic to betray the nothingness of our thoughts, and to expose ourselves as the marks for ridicule, hatred, and mortification.

To overrate our consequence, and exact more than ordinary submission, proves on many occasions not only unsuccessful, but often a shameful defeat of our proud intentions, and a stinging reverse. Genuine greatness will force mens homage in spite of themselves, without the aid of superciliousness. But if men plume themselves on imaginary consequence, and then command a gaping tribe to humble themselves before them, instead of receiving a hearty respect, (which is alone to be prized) they may be amused with an appearance of homage, but they will be secretly despised and made a common sport. An eminent example of the folly of this despicable superciliousness is seen in the persons of the Turkish sultans. Their sublime highnesses bedizen themselves in all the splendor of the east ; ransack language and thought for swelling names and titles ; talk and write as pompously as if they were descended from the sun ; look on themselves as far above the common race of monarchs ; and vouchsafe not to send ambassadors to many powerful

powerful sovereign princes, in every thing but savage glare above them, for fear of resigning a share of their dignity. But is there a respectable nobleman in any of the polished courts of Europe that does not from his soul despise the arrogance, conceit, and ignorance of these empty apologies for greatness? or is there a sensible man of a lower degree who can think they may claim even the name of *gentlemen*? They fight their battles with overgrown armies, and are generally defeated. They carry their riches and magnificence to camp with them, to enhance the enemy's spoil, and have it taken from them. They send deputies to a polite European court, to be instructed in the art of nonsense, and are laughed at for their simplicity.* In a word, all their swelling

* The occurrence here alluded to is very recent; most probably the reader recollects it, if he has attended to the public news-papers. Some little time since the grand-signior sent a deputation to the court of France, to request them to commission an able person, or persons, to instruct his people in the science of *astrology*. The answer given was, that the science was grown into disrepute with men of sense and learning, as altogether absurd and ridiculous, and therefore not worth being known. Whereupon, a little wiser than when they left their country, they returned to acquaint their master with the news, fully satisfied. This incident, in conjunction

ling language, all their stately distance, and all their haughtiness, will not screen them from contempt, because they merit not admiration.

If it were granted that they so far hit their aim, as to attract the wonder of simplicity, is that a glory when they are despised by every polished nation around them? It is as contemptible a preeminence as to assume a dominion over birds, beasts, and fishes, and to be proud of it; and nearly resembles that which was said to have been the deliberate choice of the tyrant Dionysius, who, when expelled from his tyranny over men, was glad to be king over boys.

But, to return again to private life. I love that temper which, while it has sensibility to feel the mortification of inferiority, has, at the same time, the equity not to indulge in exultation in its turn. There is something both just and generous in such a humour; something deserving of praise from morality, and of commendation from a spirit of conscious dignity.

As long as there is such a base principle in Nature as ingratitude, (and ingratitude, amongst her variety of productions will never be extinct,)

conjunction with the curious manifesto published by the Porte, to justify their rupture with the czarina, must give an exalted idea of that monarch, (and his subjects) who assumes, besides that of unrivalled greatness, the attribute of extraordinary wisdom.

extinct,) good-nature, on the one part, may, at times, be subject to the impertinent mockeries of an insolent, on the other, as harmless flies are the prey of venomous spiders. Miscreants, capable of such ingratitude, were intended for slaves, if slavery is lawful. To offer an injury unprovoked is an example of baseness, in every instance ; but to requite good with evil is diabolical. This notwithstanding, it is easily discernible when condescension may safely display itself without becoming a prey. If an inferior humbles himself at his patron's feet, it is not the part of greatness to trample on his neck who is already prostrate ; but it is the temper of meanness and beggarly arrogance to do so. When Sapore the Persian carried away captive the emperor Valerian, he triumphed over him by making him his footstool when he mounted his horse :* but his triumph had been greater if he had received him with the honours of a prince. He might then have totally disarmed him.

I will conclude with observing, that it is not the aim of this chapter to assert, that kings and beggars, noble and ignoble, should herd in common together, as if there were no distinction. That is incompatible with the established nature

* Not content with this savage treatment of his illustrious prisoner, he is said at last to have ordered him to be flead alive and rubbed with salt. —

• What havoc does ambition make !'

nature of subordination ; and even with the idea of friendship, in a great degree, which is never so firmly compacted as when subsisting between equals. Similarity of circumstances is the most proper basis for harmony : interests, views, and notions in such case accord with, and cement, each other. Experience tells us that one order of men retreats from the next beneath in proportion as the latter pursues, ever in chace, like the spokes of a wheel, but never overtaking. The great approve not a close connexion with their inferiors from their heart, because they may be losers, can hardly gain, from such intercourse. It is therefore wisest to court the alliance of equals, without banishing affability from a casual commerce with inferiors.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XXII.

THE CHEMISTRY OF MORALITY.

Diligenter intuerere has nœnias.

PHÆDR. lib. iv. prol.

IT has been noticed, and represented as a proof of curious œconomy, that, amidst the astonishing variety of the works of nature, there is a wonderful uniformity. Things and subjects, which, to a cursory view, appear not to have the least connexion, are, by a nicer inspection, found to coincide in many particulars and properties. We will endeavour to illustrate this truth, by bringing together and comparing two subjects, apparently heterogeneous ; chemical lessons and productions, and causes and effects of virtues and vices : and by metaphorically deriving, from the former, hints and applications of service in the latter.

The chemistry of morality may raise a smile ; perhaps, a scoff : but stop, pert railer, and withhold a while your taunts : you are yourself a mineral, and you are a vegetable ; and may be considered in either capacity. — There

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will

will be this advantage if man be considered as a mineral, that a wider field presents itself for observation, as the skill of an artist is most required and exerted in that department of natural history, nature leaving more to perfect therein than in the botanic world. To mineralogy we therefore chiefly confine our thoughts, and, as well as indifferent chemists can acquit themselves, we will strive to allegorize the science of man, in a few leading and detached observations, and to cement that and chemistry together; a process beset with fewer difficulties than the art of uniting two congenial bodies, iron and gold.

Man is, in very fact, to be regarded in the light of a mineral. From the hand of Nature he comes forth rude, unformed, mysterious, wild, and, perchance, unprofitable, or dangerous, inclosing within, poison, pain, and death. Like a mineral, too, he contains treasure, antidotes, health, and physic. Merely because the mineral is dug up rude, or useless, it is not thrown aside by the ingenious artist. He works and purges, transmutes and separates, compounds and decomounds, till, out of a chaotic mass, he draws a regular, pure, and valuable substance. — The natural state of man is an equally strange jumble of confusion. Finding him born with vague, irregular, and noxious inclinations, the moral chemist regulates and corrects, purifies and changes,

changes, his native features, and, out of the unmeaning mass, makes up a noble being, a valuable member of society, and a good man. But if his labour is fruitless, by the miscarriage of his process, and his subject proves refractory, he is, by general consent, recommitted to the earth, like the refuse of metal, to fructify the soil afresh, and produce those qualities which were vainly expected ; and the earth generates new seeds of treasure from the dregs and corruption of what was before rejected as worthless.

As the limits of our book will not allow us tediously to spin out the allegory, by pursuing all the operations of chemistry, we will be particular only on the great processes of *separation* or *refinement*, and *extraction of essences*.

Refinement and distillation consist in dissolving the essence from the dregs, the spirit from the caput mortuum. Cinnabar contains a hidden portion of mercury, but it is lost upon us if we use not the means of separation. Instead of a shining stream of running metal, the sulphur with which it is joined gives it the appearance of a stagnant sluggish lump, beautiful indeed to the eye, but devoid of motion and activity. Experiment only would have evinced that out of this red lump of inert matter a portion of rich flowing metal could be extracted, white as purity. As in this mineral, so in man, the virtues are choked up and lost in dregs,

and can only be called out by art and diligence. Education is that refinement in the moral world, without which man is but a brute or a savage. By education his dregs and dross are purged away, which deformed his nature, and he becomes a man.

There have been found veins of streaming purity, as we read in the accounts of the quicksilver mines of Friuli in Hungary, unmixed with heterogeneous dregs; but such prizes are esteemed as rare. History tells us of wedges of solid and almost pure gold, found by the Spaniards, and sent as a present to the monarch who swayed the sceptre at the discovery of the new world, to shew what riches they were become masters of; but they are noted as prodigies: and history records virtue found among the unpolished race of savages; but it is unsafe to trust to the hopes of such phænomena. There have been tempers of so amiable and well-disposed a turn, as scarcely to need the officious aid of moral precepts: but if Nature does at times amuse us with her prodigies of goodness, she wills that we deem them a favour, not ordinarily to be asked of her, or expected.

Different men are different minerals, and call for a diversity of treatment when we form them individually. Judgement is indispensibly requisite in our processes, without which we only gain a caput mortuum, or a poison. A general
rule

rule invariably applied is absurd. Butter will melt by the side of a fire, and recover its consistence in the cold. Salt is dissolved by water, but dried and hardened by heat.

Much emphasis is to be laid on the necessity of perfectly understanding our subject and its properties; on finding out its foibles and its excellences. When we have attained a knowledge of them, we tread on certain ground, and are enabled to proceed with a prospect of success. Then we are to correct nature by chosen methods, judiciously and with discernment; to counteract vicious inclinations, and confirm good propensities; to curb unruly transports, and give strength to languor and weakness.

In compounding, the skill of an artist is eminently concerned. Wicked sophistry thrown in the way of pliant simplicity has wrought as dismal effects as a conjunction of mercury with a salt, innocent in themselves when separate. The momentum of the former is harmless, by reason of the roundness of its constituent parts; and the stimulating qualities of the latter are of no avail, if without the momentum of the mercury: but they are armed with dreadful shafts by an unadvised combination. A susceptibility of mischief by nature must not receive the power of it from art. Pour not wine on weakness, nor put fire in the hands of madmen and infants.

In extracting essences a regular heat must be kept up. Excessive or unguided blasts will waste the spirits, will set the whole in a furious blaze. On man pour not your influence unskilfully and inordinately. Lead him gently by the hand, and cautiously proceed in treating him. Suit your precepts, your corrections, your rewards, to his humour, to his patience, to his deserts.

When the utmost care and skill are adopted, when means, in all human probability adequate to the end proposed, are used, then the default lies not at the artist's door. The subject of his labour must be naturally exceeding worthless if so much care will not avail: but such subjects there are, and such there ever will be, both in the moral and in the natural world, as long as men continue to be men, and minerals to be minerals. Some extraordinary difficulties are surmountable by the adoption of extraordinary diligence and sagacity. It is the peculiar business of skill and attention to subdue difficulties and break through obstructions. The worse a patient is, the more praise redounds to the physician that cures him.

The virtues of a nation more depend on the superintendants of it than on individuals. Men, from the polished Europeans to the American savages, from the most barbarous ages to the present enlightened time, have been all composed of the same numerical clay; law and cultivation

tivation having made the principal distinction between them. Of the same flesh and blood the glorious Antonine and the infamous Nero were made. The one was a model of virtue, by obedience to its precepts; the other a proverb of villany, by a lawless obsequiousness to his basest passions. This truth is peculiarly exemplified in the surprising influence company and connexions have on the manners and dispositions of men, which are almost invariably modified by the nearest patterns. But the case of governors and their people is nearly the same with that of workmen and their tools and materials, which are often complained of when nothing but their own ignorance or carelessness merits the blame.

In the natural world, the greatest extractor of essences is fire: in the moral world, that fire is represented by REWARDS. Virtue is an elixir, hid in the secret recesses of the heart, to be called forth by help of this moral fire. If we expect success to crown our labours, we must proceed in conformity to the rules of art. Minerals demand the assistance of fire to be advanced into metals; men need encouragement to perfect them. It is the business of prudence closely to pursue Nature in all her windings; to read the pages of her book; to borrow from her hints; and to obey her mandates. She is the best instructor, and never misleads but when she is misinterpreted. Taught by her, we

learn, that weeds only will flourish spontaneously: flowers and fruit ask our care. The most valued flowers die away if they are not cautiously tended; and fruits grow acid if not engrafted.

Rewards and pleasure are causes: virtue and the general good are effects. Dissever them, and the chain of events is broken. Virtue must either be a pleasure, or it must meet encouragement, otherwise it ceases to exist. By nature a few are virtuous, but they are exceedingly scarce: by proper cultivation we have a plentiful harvest to reward our toil. Villains are virtuous when hired in the cause; and honesty is corrupted by an enormous bribe.

Reward consists not only in pecuniary gratification; it has a more extensive latitude, and is seen in a thousand forms. A man of honour is rewarded when a villain is punished, because he escapes that punishment. He is rewarded when he is honoured and distinguished: and he is rewarded when he escapes reproach. Through these, and a variety of other channels, may a recompence be conveyed by the skilful exertion of justice. Occasion prompts what may be done, and sagacity conceives the hint. In a judicious application of a few simple truths resides the skill of a legislator; and without a knowledge of them he is bewildered in his office, and gropes unguided in the dark.

Each

Each succeeding race of man is by nature but a repetition of the same eternally revolving scenes. If nations are wisely modified by those who preside over them, their virtue, like pure and shining metal, will reflect a splendor on the moral chemists. If they are committed to the care of insufficiency or knavery, they will do no honour to their superiors.

Read the history of every state and nation that has enjoyed existence, and we find law and legislature, misrule and anarchy, to have been the pristine sources of order and disorder. To look for virtue from any thing but its cause, is to look for fire in the sea. Every imaginable distinction ought to be shewn to its friends, or Astræa will never reside amongst us. In vain we implore the presence of that amiable goddess, if we prepare not for her a place fit for her reception.

When once the manners of a nation begin to be improved, the work advances in a triplicate ratio, by the power of example. The burden, that before rested on the basis of reward, is eased by this second strenuous advocate in the cause. Men are ashamed of being virtuous alone, because it looks like puritanism and superstition: they love to have companions to keep them in countenance, and divest them of the appearance of singularity. So that, in this case, as in many others, well to begin the work is strictly half the completion of it. To

the force of example must be chiefly attributed those repeated acts of fortitude in war signalized by the Romans. A few leading men among them at first exerted their prowess against their enemies the Sabines, the Gauls, and some other nations, in defence of their doubtful situation, and their leading examples were copied by the whole race of their emulous posterity, who found courage and victory leagued in common together.

From the loins of this hardy race, by the corruption of tyrant emperors, and a contagious commerce with foreign subjects, sprang the effeminate musical Italians, the very antithesis of their warlike progenitors : the former were animated by the trumpet of war ; the latter die away at *the lascivious pleasing of a lute*. Themselves, unman'd, are described in the softened accents of their castrated language, which lost its nerves when they lost their freedom and spirit, as if the organs of speech were new-modelled with their manners. But the same influence of cause, that Italianized Romans, would, reversed, in process of time, Romanize Italians.—Not that I have lost sight of the charge exhibited, in a former chapter, against the abuse of this fortitude ; which, regulated by justice, is sublimate dulcified, but, without that curb, a sword in the hand of a maniac, and a violent poison.

In

In the foregoing considerations is implied the important trust committed to princes and magistrates; which is nothing less than the general good of their subjects, and the viceroyalty of heaven on earth. The original source of virtues is to be traced up to the throne; from whence, in rivulets, it flows, or ought to flow, through all the inferior channels of legislation. Individuals, their subjects, have little else to consult, in comparison to them, besides their private concerns; but they have the burden of Atlas resting on their shoulders.

By way of compensation for these expected services, honours were invented, to stimulate their endeavours, and bribe them to a faithful discharge of their several duties. Riches and splendor are only the hires of their office, not intended as baubles and toys, to amuse and divert the great babies of a nation. On the head of a useless monarch the crown is but a tinsel cap; his sword is a foil; his sceptre a cat-stick; and his globe a tennis-ball.

Arduous as is the undertaking of these heroic representatives of mankind, it has been generally considered as their principal department, to provide for their own ambition, their own pleasures, their own caprices; and to leave the reins of government to the guidance of their most dextrous parasites. It has been treasured up as a sacred maxim, though a solœ-

cism in common sense, that a whole nation was intended for the use of one paramount, and not that that one paramount is only the head steward of a nation. It is, it must be owned, an impossibility to please every one; but it too frequently falls out, that these stewards please none but themselves, or those whose private views will not permit them to be displeased, because they are greater gainers by a fair face than they would have been by their frowns; which is the reverse of the undertakers case in *The Funeral*.

It was not for negligence and inattention to his duty that Antoninus was almost adored; that Titus was called, *The Delight of mankind*; and that Alfred of England, and Henry IV. of France, acquired the surname of *Great*. They signalized their virtue as the price for the scepter they swayed, and confirmed their right to it by the prudent exercise of their power. In considering themselves as princes, they did not forget that their subjects were little princes under them, whose welfare was to be consulted as well as their own, from which it was inseparable.

Heads of families and instructors are kings in an inferior capacity, and preside over little communities. 'Tis theirs to mould the tender mind; to dis sever the metal from the dross; to root up the weeds from among the flowers. Every superior is, in his department, the chemist of virtue and the public good, and has an additional

ditional trust reposed in him, the due execution of which is a debt incurred to those over whom he presides ; and as far as he acquits himself well he is the treasure of a nation.

The department of individuals is to select able and upright magistrates and stewards to compose the council of a kingdom, and reform abuses. If insufficient representatives are fixed on without choice, their constituents must lament without pity. If a due representation is made, there will be no room for repentance.

One individual, it is true, has but one voice ; but that is no reason why he should prostitute it in favour of a knave that will abuse his trust : the nation is composed of individuals, and may be ruined or exalted by their concurrent suffrages. And if, at the instigation of private views, simple people receive a niggardly pittance for the sale of their liberty and the remote share they have in the legislature, they pay dearly for their paltry bargain in the injury that accrues to the nation collectively from their perjured votes. It is a humour truly idiotic, that men will murmur at the measures of an administration, and, with the same breath, give their suffrages to strengthen the authority of the men they complain of. By the excellent constitution of this country, the public welfare, and the redress of grievances, are vested in private hands when they agree in support of the investiture.

To

To sum up the tenor of this chapter in brief, and not farther to declame, these important truths should be remembered as reverently as the last words of a departing soul ; that man is a MINERAL ; that governors are CHEMISTS ; and that virtue is an ELIXIR.



CHAPTER



CHAPTER XXIII, AND LAST.

ON PREJUDICE.

Ὁ δὲ νόμος, ἐπ' ἁκρας τὰς κορυφᾶς τῆ σώματος ιδρύμενος; καὶ ἔχων περιαιγία καὶ διαυγία τὰν ἔποψιν, μαστεύεται τὰν τῶν ὄντων φρόνασιν· καὶ τῆτ' ἔργον ἐντὶ αὐτῷ κατὰ φύσιν, τὸ, μαγευσάμενον καὶ κλησάμενον, ἀκολουθεῖσαι τοῖς βελίοσιν αὐτῷ καὶ τιμωτάτοις. THEAG Pythag.

I Have chosen to close this volume with strictures on the subject of prejudice, by way of anticipation against surprise at any freedoms I may be thought to have taken with common and received opinions; as well as because prejudice is the greatest obstruction to real knowledge that ever spread a veil over it. The first step to virtue, say moralists, is to divest ourselves of vice: and, by parity of reasoning, the leading effort to adorn the mind is to purge it of prejudice, which, like slime, muddles the transparent fountain of truth.

The consequences of prejudice would not be of such moment were they confined to opinion; but daily observation teaches that the practice of men is under the immediate and powerful

powerful direction of its influence, and often distorted from the paths of rectitude by obsequious attention to its dictates. The ghosts of thousands, sent untimely to their graves, rise up in judgement against it.

In points of moment prejudices are followed by the worst of consequences to peace and harmony. Few are satisfied with being alone under the tyranny of false opinions, without endeavouring to enslave others and confine them with the same shackles themselves have submitted to wear. Men look with envy and hatred on the retainers to different sentiments, and consider their dissent from them as a reproach, and a contempt to their judgement and persons. Hence arise, especially in the political world, bickerings and animosity, rancor and bloodshed, with every evil that the malice of a little mind can invent. From individuals the rage extends to numerous parties, and whole communities are forced, by dint of tyranny, to enlist in the cause. It is a diverting spectacle to see opposite sets of two-legged wolves, at a country election, foaming and worrying one another, they know not why, in defence of representatives, who are regaled by their simplicity, and purpose to sell them at the earliest market.

True friendship and harmony can subsist only where there is nearly an uniformity of opinions; and uniformity of opinion cannot safely be constructed on any other basis than that of general

neral truths, which continue invariably the same.

Prejudice and error, it must be owned, have united companions in a cause, and been productive of hearty friendship, on some occasions, equally with truth itself; but they are uncertain foundations to trust to, perpetually changing as tempers change. The vulgar, who are confined by the strongest fetters of prejudice, are eternally jarring, in consequence of their blindness, which suffers them to disquiet one another, in obedience to every transport of passion. Men, whose understandings are refined, on the other hand, happily coincide, by a certain sympathy, in their opinions, and live in harmony. The general views they have of things supersede particular errors, which are the seeds of dissension, and conjointly operate to universal peace.

I would not have it supposed I mean to say, that all men of sense agree in every particular. Such a harmony is utterly incompatible with human nature, and would terminate in a general stagnation. Of the millions that inhabit our globe, there are not any two who completely resemble each other; nor should we wish for such an universality. A variety of views and objects, a variety of offices and occupations, a variety of odours and flavours, a variety of pleasures and amusements, call for a variety of tastes, tempers, and choices, or the bounty of Nature is lost. Must the sprightly Mira pine for

for a gallant because Eugenius loves a melting maid? or must the languishing Delia die unblest because Florio is taken with brilliant charms? The queen of beauty answers, No: her decree is, that Mira should be happy in the possession of Florio, and Delia be the choice of her Eugenius: that both the pairs should live in harmony as friends, and differ only about the object of their love.

Reason will not evince that what is agreeable to the palate of one, must likewise please the taste of another. The pores and particles of our organs are variously disposed and constructed, and produce not in every one the same flavour: the tempers of men are different, and are differently affected by objects in themselves the same. Brutus might sacrifice a bosom-friend to the public, and assassinate Cæsar, whilst another, warmed with the feeling of a friend, could not resign up his private affection after all his struggles of mind to deliver his country. We pardon, nay, love them both for their virtues, as much as we should condemn them both if they consented to the usurper's tyranny without the dictates of friendship. Primary and leading truths are not subject to variation,* in polished minds, as dependent on eternal and unalterable principles. To injure another with-

out

* Sic enim est faciendum, ut contra naturam universam nihil contendamus; ea tamen conservata, propriam naturam sequamur. CICERO.

out a cause cannot be justified by the most subtle sophistry, or the most eloquent harangue. Reason condemns it on certain *data*, admitted by every one exempt from prejudice. And if we allow, with Pope, that there are but few *certain truths* in the world, we cannot so far vindicate Pyrrhonism, as to grant that there are none at all.

Prejudice is the more dangerous, as it bears the semblance of truth, being just conclusions from false premises, and is on that account with more difficulty avoided. An open foe is less to be dreaded than a secret flattering enemy, because we are aware of him : and it may even be questioned if the votaries of prejudice are not more convinced of the reality of those absurdities they entertain, than the most rational philosopher is of any general truth he believes. Narrow minds are ever obstinate in their opinions : clear understandings are more diffident in deciding, better acquainted with the apostish chicanery of error, and more open to conviction when afforded them.

There is no bound set to this ape of truth. To what lengths has not prejudice led men ? Absurdities, that brutes would be shocked at, have been believed by men. Onions and crocodiles have been adored as gods. The most exalted nonsense of the wildest genius has been, by the power of prejudice, received with the honours of truth, and propagated.

When

When we see a lunatic, with all his wildness about him, we are naturally led to afford him our pity. The disease of mind he labours under is regarded as one of the greatest evils that can befall a human being: the tenderest concern is expressed in endeavours to recal his fugitive senses, and physic aid is applied to for relief. But prejudice, which is a partial lunacy, is nursed and cherished. No pity is afforded to this species of insanity; no cure is sought for one agitated by this demon of absurdity: he is not esteemed a demoniac, though his madness extends to the subversion of unity, friendship, and peace.

If we nicely examine the matter, we shall find that the greater part of received notions are not the result of reflexion, but that they are derived by patrimonial inheritance. Prejudices descend, like estates, from father to son; and the latter seems to think this part of his inheritance a necessary article of his father's will, which must not be reversed, on pain of his losing the other legacies included in the testament.

Not that it is proper for every one to set himself up for a thinker, in opposition to wiser heads, or on points he is not a judge of. It is no more the business of some to make their own opinions than it is to make their own cloaths: all are not fit for thinkers, and all are not fit for taylors. A milkmaid that would
 wrangle

wrangle with Newton about the origin of colours, would do well to dispose of her wares. Though the liquid she deals in is always white, it will not be expected of her to account for this accidental quality, as philosophers themselves have disputed whether the rays of light are most reflected from large or from small pores, from the particles or from the vacuities of matter.*

I would only urge, as many a simple man has done before me, that we should not embrace a sentiment for sterling because our grandmothers did so, when indisputable arguments are brought to contradict it. Many a man, to whom Nature has imparted a bountiful share of good sense, has had that blessing miserably lost on him, by servilely adhering to the dogmas of others, less distinguished for understanding than himself. To have an opinion backed by another is unquestionably one argument that may be alleged in favour of that opinion: but before it be set down for sterling, by a man of moderate discernment, it ought to be examined on principles of reason, particularly if controverted. Every absurdity of heathen mythology, every deceit of monkish superstition, but for reflection, had been received at this day, and acknowledged for divine.

Prejudices

* See Voltaire's remarks on Newton's elements of optics.

Prejudices are implanted in the tender minds of youth as early as they are capable of ideas. When under the care of their nurses, they are taught to believe in ghosts, hobgoblins, and witches : and when that stage of life is succeeded by the next, they are instructed to despise and hate the members of a different communion, and the natives of a different country. Thus prejudice being sucked in, as it were, with their mothers milk, it is not subject of wonder that it grows up with them. A boy, that is strongly possessed of the notion of sprites and apparitions, will dread the dark, in spite of his reason, when grown a man.

As one idea of genuine knowledge suggests another, so one false conception is engendered from the spawn of another. Erroneous maxims in one point are proper foundations for a million more. The concatenation of our reasonings may as well be rendered subservient to the purposes of error, as become steps to sublimer truths. False notions are, then, to be avoided with redoubled precaution for the train of absurdities, which (inseparable companions as Bardolph, Nim, and Pistol,) closely pursue each others heel. It is more prudent to combat a single foe, than, by losing time, to allow him opportunity to convene a host to his assistance.

The meanness of prejudice, were there no evils arising from it, should lead to avoid it.

Every

Every narrow notion, a man of little mind betrays to a person of sense, is regarded by the latter as the boundary of his understanding, planted there by his niggardly Genius, and purchases his contempt; or else his pity, which is nearly-allied to his contempt. His pride ought, in such a case, to receive an alarm, and excite to a removal of the cause of his disgrace. I know not whether the character of a fool is not more disliked than that of a knave, by the iniquity of the times; however the latter, from numberless considerations, should meet the scorn.

Reflections like these are obvious to the lowest capacity. No one in his senses will go about to contradict what has been in this chapter asserted, and yet all of us, in some instances or other, have need of such advice. The cap fits the greater half of the world; but who will own and wear it? Few are found so candid. This very blind partiality to ourselves is the grand prejudice that rivets and confirms all our other prejudices: till men are persuaded that they can be in the wrong, they never will be at the pains of informing themselves in what they err. Every one is to himself a world, an universal mind, and a judge supreme, with whom resides the last appeal; and at the tribunal of each individual's opinion must all other men, and their actions, fall prostrate, to
receive

receive their sentence. We all propose ourselves as patterns and teachers, but refuse to submit to the example or judgement of any one: we all, like dictators, assume sovereignty in decision, and in private indulge the pride, vanity, and arrogance, which are displayed in a more public manner by an

AUTHOR.

The E N D.







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